United Nations A/71/857–S/2017/273

General Assembly
Security Council

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General Assembly
Seventy-first session
Agenda item 61
Peacebuilding and sustaining peace

Security Council
Seventy-second year

Letter dated 30 March 2017 from the Permanent Representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to enclose herewith a statement released by the spokesman for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 29 March 2017 with regard to the fact that the United States is driving the situation on the Korean peninsula to an ever more extreme phase through the profound confusion of right and wrong (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 61, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Ja Song Nam
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

17-05409 (E) 060417

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Annex to the letter dated 30 March 2017 from the Permanent Representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Statement released by the spokesman for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 29 March 2017 with regard to the fact that the United States is driving the situation on the Korean peninsula to an ever more extreme phase through the profound confusion of right and wrong

The United States will be held accountable for the outbreak of war on the Korean peninsula.

A spokesman for the Foreign Ministry of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) released a statement on 29 March 2017 with regard the fact that the United States is driving the situation on the Korean peninsula to an ever more extreme phase through the profound confusion of right and wrong.

The statement recalled the fact that, on 27 March, a spokesman for the United States Department of State had malignantly referred to DPRK over the warning served by a spokesman for the General Staff of the Korean People's Army with regard to the "special operation" staged by the United States and the south Korean forces, terming it a "provocative act" and "inflammatory remarks".

The warning is an entirely just measure for self-defence against the heinous provocateurs, given the prevailing situation that has reached a phase that can never be overlooked.

After kicking-off joint military drills involving hundreds of thousands of troops and nuclear strategic assets, the United States is staging a "special operation" drill, the keynotes of which are a "beheading operation" for "eliminating the headquarters" of a sovereign State and a "preemptive strike" operation designed to destroy its nuclear and rocket bases. Its ulterior design is clear.

The United States has worked hard to justify the war rehearsals, talking about its transparency, but it is nothing more than a paradox. Its trumpeting about transparency is just the outbursts of a gangster in order to commit robbery in broad daylight.

As the strategic depth of DPRK is not big, the only way to defend itself from a sudden pre-emptive attack from the modern strategic assets and special warfare units of the United States is just to mount a resolute pre-emptive attack.

If a war breaks out on the Korean peninsula, the United States will be held wholly accountable for it, no matter who launches a pre-emptive attack, as it is causing trouble by bringing lots of nuclear strategic assets and special warfare means, not content with persisting in its hostile policy toward DPRK.

United Nations S/2017/274

Security Council

Distr.: General
31 March 2017

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Letter dated 27 March 2017 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to submit herewith a non-paper, compiled as a courtesy by the Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom to the United Nations, summarizing the themes and ideas discussed by the participants in the open debate convened on 15 March 2017 on the subject "Trafficking in persons in conflict situations: forced labour, slavery and other similar practices" (see annex).

I am grateful for your contribution to this open debate on such an important topic. We hope that the summary of the ideas and themes discussed in the debate will serve as an aide-memoire in the development of your report, requested by the Security Council in its resolution 2331 (2016), and for Member States and international organizations, as well as a spur to further action to end the scourge of human trafficking, modern slavery and forced labour.

I would be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Matthew **Rycroft**

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Annex to the letter dated 27 March 2017 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Presidential summary of the open debate of the Security Council held on 15 March 2017 on the subject "Trafficking in persons in conflict situations: forced labour, slavery and other similar practices"

Introduction

The open debate of the Security Council held on 15 March 2017 on the subject "Trafficking in persons in conflict situations: forced labour, slavery and other similar practices" was convened during the United Kingdom's Presidency of the Council. The debate, which built upon the open debate held under the Presidency of Spain in December 2016 and Council resolution 2331 (2016) of 20 December 2016, was held in order to draw particular attention to the issues of modern slavery and forced labour and the role of organized crime groups in perpetuating slavery during conflict.

Representatives from 65 countries, including 18 at the ministerial level, spoke at the event, alongside 10 speakers from the United Nations and other international organizations. A number of representatives highlighted that, although the institution of slavery had largely been abolished, the abhorrent practice of slavery continued in almost every country as a largely hidden crime. Speakers highlighted the plight of an estimated 46 million people still living in conditions of slavery, including 21 million in situations of forced labour. Addressing the Security Council, the Secretary-General stated: "I wish that I could say that human trafficking is a thing of the past. Unfortunately, that is not the case ... I believe it is our duty to really commit ourselves to do everything to make this a clear priority for all Governments and for all forms of international cooperation". The Secretary-General's leadership role in addressing this issue was welcomed.

In addition to the Secretary-General, the Security Council also heard from a number of experts in the field, including the Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Yury Fedotov, the Director of Programmes and Development at the Elman Peace and Human Rights Centre, Ilwad Elman, and the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner of the United Kingdom, Kevin Hyland.

The present summary captures the main themes and ideas for action that emerged from the presentations by the experts and the representatives of Member States and international organizations who spoke during the debate. While it does not represent an endorsement of the ideas presented at the debate, we hope, by recording them, to stimulate discussion and further action. A full record of the debate is available on the website of the Security Council (see S/PV.7898).

Themes

Numerous speakers referred to the extensive legal frameworks, both international and national, prohibiting slavery, forced labour and trafficking in

persons. At the international level they include: the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children of 2000; the Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention of 1930; the Slavery Convention signed at Geneva on 25 September 1926; and the Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery of 1956. Modern slavery, forced labour and trafficking are also addressed in frameworks such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the International Covenant on Political and Civil Rights. Despite such frameworks, however, many speakers noted that implementation and enforcement had been lacking, in particular with regard to prosecution rates and support to victims.

In line with the Security Council mandate, the debate focused on human trafficking, slavery and forced labour in conflict situations. Many speakers highlighted the role played by organized crime groups, armed groups and terrorists in using the chaos and lack of rule of law in areas affected by conflict to exploit people for profit or to strengthen their organizations. This also enables the groups to sustain their criminal, terrorist and combat activities, further undermining international peace and security. These groups are acting within a culture of impunity, and more needs to be done to disrupt and disband them.

The breakdown of law and order in conflict areas makes civilians especially vulnerable to human trafficking and modern slavery, which can take a variety of forms, including sexual exploitation, forced labour and forced recruitment. Conflict also opens up new ungoverned routes for migration. The desperation and the lack of protection resulting from displacement also place migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons at risk of human trafficking. The exploitation of such groups in the Sahel and Libya was specifically flagged as egregious examples of abuse.

Many speakers also underlined the need to step up efforts to tackle the illicit financial revenues and flows generated by human trafficking, modern slavery and forced labour. Such profits sustain perpetrators, fuel corruption and can be linked directly and indirectly to trafficking in drugs and weapons, especially in conflict zones.

Ideas for action

A large number of ideas were put forward to improve efforts to tackle human trafficking, slavery and forced labour. These ideas were split into international and national efforts. As requested by the Security Council in its resolution 2331 (2016), the Secretary-General is due to report, by December 2017, on measures to strengthen action against human trafficking. The aim of the open debate was in part to help to stimulate ideas for that report.

The international response

1. Given that this set of issues needs a coordinated response across multiple United Nations bodies and mandate holders, the United Nations is encouraged to strengthen coherence. The Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons has a key role to play in strengthening this response, and all relevant bodies and agencies are encouraged to participate fully.

2. The fight to end human trafficking, modern slavery and forced labour requires a system-wide approach, involving the private sector, civil society, Member States and international organizations. Alliance 8.7, which has been established to provide just such a multi-stakeholder forum for the sharing of information and best practices, is a valued and welcome contribution.

3. UNODC has a key part to play in its role as guardian of the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and in providing technical assistance to Member States. The Council also heard that the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) can provide assistance, including in cooperation with UNODC. The International Labour Organization (ILO), through its mandate on forced labour, was also highlighted as having a role. The key leadership of the International Organization for Migration means that it too has a role, as do other United Nations organizations with relevant mandates, country presence and expertise. States were encouraged to make full use of such support as needed.

4. Peacekeeping operations and humanitarian agencies were encouraged to ensure that their staff are adequately trained to identify risk factors, help to prevent victims of trafficking and modern slavery and, where appropriate, intervene in the interest of protecting civilians. Some Member States suggested that guidelines could be developed to facilitate such training.

5. Ensuring that global business supply chains are free from forced labour and other forms of trafficking and modern slavery is an important element in stemming the financial flows to terrorist and other criminal groups that seek to profit from slavery in conflict.

6. The United Nations was encouraged to ensure that its procurement and supply chains were free of forced labour and other forms of trafficking and that sexual abuse and exploitation by United Nations peacekeepers is prevented and those responsible held to account.

7. Regional processes are a crucial part of the fight against human trafficking, modern slavery and forced labour. The Bali, Addis Ababa, Khartoum, Rabat and Almaty processes were all noted as playing a significant role in coordinating and driving enforcement.

8. A number of speakers highlighted the need for improved data on the topic and flagged the publication of the Global Report on Trafficking in Persons, prepared by UNODC, as an important tool for enabling the collection and dissemination of relevant and comparable figures, which are critical for understanding the scale of the problem and making progress towards addressing it. Member States were also encouraged to enhance data-collection capacity and information-sharing as a way of promoting cooperation in the fight against all forms of trafficking.

9. The particular vulnerability of migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons and the current situation of the 65 million people displaced worldwide prompted several speakers to highlight the important role that global compacts for refugees and for safe, orderly and regular migration could play and, in particular, the thematic consultation in October 2016 on the issue of human trafficking and migration. States also highlighted the need to support refugee-hosting States in providing a safe and dignified place of refuge.

Member States

10. Member States were encouraged to ratify and fully implement the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children of 2000, the Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention of 1930, and the Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery of 1956.

11. Cooperation among States, particularly on law enforcement, was also encouraged. Given the low rates of prosecution, Member States were encouraged to step up efforts to prosecute crimes of human trafficking, modern slavery and forced labour, to enact, enforce and strengthen legislation that criminalizes all trafficking in persons and to combat and prosecute those responsible, including transnational organized criminal networks. The particular role of transnational organized crime groups should be considered further in the report of the Secretary-General. Victims of such crimes, who should not be criminalized, also need greater support, including rehabilitation.

12. Member States were encouraged to adopt relevant ILO guidelines on business supply chains and to increase the sharing of financial intelligence, with a view to disrupting transnational criminal networks and other groups that engage in human trafficking and modern slavery.

13. A number of speakers highlighted the need to increase the scale of resourcing dedicated to tackling modern slavery, forced labour and trafficking. The representative of the United States of America highlighted a new initiative that aims to raise $1.5 billion to support efforts to end modern slavery. Others mentioned the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children and the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery. Member States were encouraged to consider increasing their commitments on this set of issues, including through those mechanisms.

14. The need to keep human trafficking, modern slavery and forced labour prominently on the agenda at the United Nations was also highlighted. Given that the issue cuts across all three pillars of the United Nations, it should be considered through all relevant channels, including through the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, the high-level political forum on sustainable development, the Human Rights Council, the Security Council and the General Assembly, as well as during the week of the high-level debate of the General Assembly.

United Nations A/ES-10/748–S/2017/275

General Assembly
Security Council

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3 April 2017

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General Assembly
Tenth emergency special session
Agenda item 5
Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Seventy-second year

Identical letters dated 31 March 2017 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

Hope for a just and comprehensive peace between Israel and the State of Palestine is rapidly diminishing as Israel, the occupying Power, continues with its systematic policies of settler colonialism, apartheid and ethnic cleansing in the Occupied State of Palestine, including East Jerusalem. It is absolutely urgent that the international community, particularly the Security Council, act to bring Israel into compliance with international law and United Nations resolutions, including, resolution 2334 (2016).

In another sharp rebuke to international efforts to bring about a political horizon for peace, Israel continues with its unapologetic rejection of peace and continues, with brazen intent, to pursue its illegal schemes with another announcement for more illegal settlements to be built in Occupied Palestine. In fact, the announcement on 30 March 2017 by Israel's so-called "security cabinet" was different from its previous announcements of illegal settlement-building in existing settlements; this announcement was for an entirely new illegal settlement — one in the heart of Palestine — aimed at placating the extremist settlers from the illegal settlement of "Amona".

According to the Israeli non-governmental organization Peace Now, the decision taken on 30 March 2017 includes three major advancements of illegal settlements in the Occupied West Bank. It includes "the establishment of a new settlement, deep in the West Bank and for the first time since 1991; the publication of tenders for nearly 2,000 housing units; and the declaration of almost 1,000 dunams as 'public lands,' otherwise termed 'state lands,' that will enable the 'retroactive legalization' of three outposts, 'Palgei Maim', 'Givat Haroeh' and 'Adei Ad', all located north of Ramallah and deep in the West Bank." Those latest announcements are not only a violation of Security Council resolution 2334 (2016)

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but are also a grave breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention, notably article 49 and article 33, as well as a war crime under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, which stipulates that an occupying Power is prohibited from transferring, directly or indirectly, parts of its own population into the occupied territory.

It is clear by its continuing actions and policies that Israel has no reservations about blatantly disrespecting world opinion or international law as it continues with its expansion and building of illegal settlements throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. Hanan Ashrawi, an Executive Committee Member of the Palestine Liberation Organization, stated that this latest announcement proves that Israel's right wing pro-settler government, under Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, "is more committed to appeasing its illegal settler population than to abiding by the requirements for stability and a just peace".

The Palestinian leadership strongly condemns this recent Israeli announcement, which comes less than one week after the report of the Secretary-General submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 2334 (2016), which was delivered to the Council in an oral briefing on 24 March 2017 by the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General, Nickolay Mladenov. In the report, it was clearly stated, inter alia, that even though the Security Council, in paragraph 2 of resolution 2334 (2016), "reiterates its demand that Israel immediately and completely cease all settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem", Israel has taken no such steps in this regard during the reporting period. In the report it was noted that, on the contrary, since the adoption of resolution 2334 (2016), there was a notable increase in statements, announcements and decisions related to settlement construction and expansion. In this regard, we welcome the reaffirmation on 31 March 2017 by the Secretary-General, through his spokesperson, that reiterated the findings in his report, stated again the obstacle to peace that illegal settlements pose and stated that he "condemns all unilateral actions that, like the present one, threaten peace and undermine the two-State solution".

Israel's reckless actions, which have continued and have been deliberately escalated since the adoption of resolution 2334 (2016), are exacerbating tensions and risking further destabilization of the fragile situation on the ground. It is high time for the international community to go beyond condemnation or expressing outrage about Israel's illegal practices of colonization. Urgent and concrete action is required. The international community must not allow Israel to continue to act above the law without consequences. The fact that the occupying Power has been allowed to maintain its occupation and subjugation of an entire nation of people for 50 years has been in large part because the international community has yet to take the required and necessary actions to bring a halt to Israel's crimes.

We therefore call for immediate action and follow-up to Israel's violations, including its violation of resolution 2334 (2016). The time has come for the members of the international community to choose between the pursuit of peace and justice or to allow for more unilateral, illegal Israeli moves which will only bring further destabilization and bloodshed. It is way overdue for the world to stand up to the occupying Power and demand an end to its brutal military occupation and an end

to its blatant disregard for the human rights of the Palestinian people and their land, and allow them to live as a free people in their own independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

The present letter is in follow-up to our 607 previous letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 23 March 2017 (A/ES-10/747-S/2017/251), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations being committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine
to the United Nations

United Nations S/2017/276

Security Council

Distr.: General
31 March 2017

Original: English

Letter dated 28 March 2017 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to refer to the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID). Following the usual consultations, it is my intention, as well as that of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, to appoint Jeremiah Nyamane Kingsley Mamabolo (South Africa) as African Union-United Nations Joint Special Representative for Darfur and Head of UNAMID, with responsibilities including those of African Union-United Nations Joint Chief Mediator, for a period of one year.

Mr. Mamabolo has been serving in UNAMID since 2016, first as Deputy Joint Special Representative and then as Acting Joint Special Representative, following the departure of Martin Ihoeghian Uhomoibhi (Nigeria) on 4 January 2017.

I would be grateful if you could bring this matter to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) António **Guterres**

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United Nations S/2017/277

Security Council

Distr.: General
31 March 2017

Original: English

Letter dated 31 March 2017 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to inform you that your letter dated 28 March 2017 (S/2017/276) concerning your intention, as well as that of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, His Excellency Moussa Faki Mahamat, to appoint Jeremiah Nyamane Kingsley Mamabolo (South Africa) as Joint Special Representative for Darfur and Head of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), with responsibilities including those of the African Union-United Nations Joint Chief Mediator, for a period of one year, has been brought to the attention of the members of the Security Council. They take note of the intention expressed in your letter.

(*Signed*) Matthew **Rycroft**
President of the Security Council

17-05238 (E) 030417

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United Nations S/2017/278

Security Council

Distr.: General
5 April 2017
English
Original: Russian

Letter dated 31 March 2017 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith humanitarian and information bulletins from the Russian Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic for the period 28-31 March 2017 (see annex).

I should be grateful if this letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) P. **Ilichev**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

17-05558 (E) 060417 100417

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Annex to the letter dated 31 March 2017 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Humanitarian bulletin of the Russian Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic (28 March 2017)

Provision of humanitarian aid to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic by the Russian Federation

Over the past 24 hours, the Russian Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides has carried out seven humanitarian operations in Aleppo governorate.

In Aleppo city, 16.8 tons of food, 6 tons of bottled drinking water and 500 food parcels were delivered to residents of Furqan, Sakhur and Shaykh Maqsud districts, to schools in Uqba bin Nafi in Muhammad Bak district and the School of Arts for Women in Khalidiyah district, to a refugee camp and to Manbij in Aleppo governorate.

Over the past 24 hours, humanitarian assistance has been provided to 8,100 residents. In total, 24.5 tons of humanitarian cargoes have been distributed to the population.

Provision of humanitarian aid to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic by international organizations

Over the past 24 hours, the United Nations and partners have continued to provide medical, psychological and legal assistance to the Syrian Arab Republic. Work is also still under way to restore infrastructure and provide temporary accommodation to those in need.

Information bulletin of the Russian Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic (29 March 2017)

Reconciliation of opposing sides

Over the past 24 hours, seven ceasefire agreements have been signed with Khirbat al-Hamam, Uyun al-Wadi and Khirbat Ghazi in Homs governorate, Ayyubah in Qunaytirah governorate, Hajnah in Damascus governorate, Waqam in Suwayda' governorate and Buraq in Dar'a governorate.

The number of populated areas that have joined the reconciliation process has increased to 1,404.

Negotiations on joining the ceasefire regime continued with armed opposition groups in Aleppo, Damascus, Hama, Homs and Qunaytirah governorates.

The number of armed groups that have announced their commitment to accepting and fulfilling the terms of the ceasefire of 27 February 2016 remains unchanged at 136.

The number of populated areas which the Syrian government forces have liberated from armed groups of the international terrorist organization Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) since 1 January 2017 remains unchanged at 198.

A total area of 3,499.2 square kilometres has been liberated.

Observance of the ceasefire regime

At 0000 hours on 30 December 2016, a ceasefire came into force in accordance with the consolidated agreement on a comprehensive resolution of the Syrian crisis.

The number of Syrian opposition armed groups that have joined the ceasefire regime is 64.

Over the past 24 hours, the Russian representative office of the Russian and Turkish Joint Commission reviewing issues related to violations of the consolidated agreement has reported 14 violations in the following governorates: 9 in Damascus, 3 in Ladhiqiyah and 2 in Hama.

The Turkish representative office has reported 12 violations in the following governorates: 4 in Damascus, 4 in Hama, 2 in Aleppo, 1 in Dar'a and 1 in Idlib.

The Russian representative office has been unable to confirm all 12 violations during its investigations of the incidents.

Humanitarian bulletin of the Russian Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic (29 March 2017)

Provision of humanitarian aid to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic by the Russian Federation

Over the past 24 hours, the Russian Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides has carried out seven humanitarian operations: six in Aleppo governorate and one in Qunaytirah governorate.

In Aleppo city, 3,000 portions of hot food and bread were delivered to residents of A'zamiyah, Shaykh Taha, Karm al-Maz, Jamiliyah, Shaykh Maqsud and Salihin districts.

In Qunaytirah governorate, 350 food parcels were distributed to residents of Ayyubah.

Over the past 24 hours, humanitarian assistance has been provided to 3,350 residents. In total, 3 tons of humanitarian cargoes have been distributed to the population.

Provision of humanitarian aid to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic by international organizations

With the assistance of the Russian Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides, two humanitarian convoys delivered United Nations cargoes from the cities of Damascus and Homs to Bludan in Damascus governorate and Talbisah in Homs governorate.

Russian airplanes parachuted 21 tons of humanitarian cargoes (food products) to the city of Dayr al-Zawr, which were received by the Syrian authorities through the United Nations.

Information bulletin of the Russian Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic (30 March 2017)

Reconciliation of opposing sides

Over the past 24 hours, 11 ceasefire agreements have been signed with Sab'iniyah, Baliyah, Shaqraniyah and Suwaymarah in Dar'a governorate, with Fahil and Qattinah in Homs governorate, and with Shaykh Zayyat, Shaykh Najjar, Hutah, Abu Jabbar and Qatar in Aleppo governorate.

The number of populated areas that have joined the reconciliation process has increased to 1,415.

Negotiations on joining the ceasefire regime continued with armed opposition groups in Aleppo, Damascus, Hama, Homs and Qunaytirah governorates.

The number of armed groups that have announced their commitment to accepting and fulfilling the terms of the ceasefire of 27 February 2016 remains unchanged at 136.

The number of populated areas which the Syrian government forces have liberated from armed groups of the international terrorist organization Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) since 1 January 2017 has increased to 207.

Over the past 24 hours, government forces have gained control of 73.7 square kilometres. A total area of 3,572.9 square kilometres has been liberated.

Observance of the ceasefire regime

At 0000 hours on 30 December 2016, a ceasefire came into force in accordance with the consolidated agreement on a comprehensive resolution of the Syrian crisis.

The number of Syrian opposition armed groups that have joined the ceasefire regime is 64.

Over the past 24 hours, the Russian representative office of the Russian and Turkish Joint Commission reviewing issues related to violations of the consolidated agreement has reported 14 violations in the following governorates: 6 in Damascus, 4 in Hama and 4 in Ladhiqiyah.

The Turkish representative office has reported 11 violations of the consolidated agreement in the following governorates: 3 in Damascus, 3 in Hama, 2 in Homs, 1 in Aleppo, 1 in Dar'a and 1 in Ladhiqiyah.

The Russian representative office has been unable to confirm all 11 violations during its investigations of the incidents.

Humanitarian bulletin of the Russian Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic (30 March 2017)

Provision of humanitarian aid to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic by the Russian Federation

Over the past 24 hours, the Russian Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides has carried out five humanitarian operations in Aleppo governorate.

In Aleppo city, six tons of bottled drinking water were delivered to residents of Jadidah, Karm al-Da'da', Bani Zayd, Shaykh Maqsud and Jabal Badro.

Over the past 24 hours, humanitarian assistance has been provided to 1,894 residents. In total, 6 tons of humanitarian cargoes have been distributed to the population.

Provision of humanitarian aid to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic by international organizations

Russian airplanes parachuted 20.7 tons of humanitarian cargoes (food parcels) to the city of Dayr al-Zawr, which were received by the Syrian authorities through the United Nations.

Information bulletin of the Russian Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic (31 March 2017)

Reconciliation of opposing sides

Over the past 24 hours, four ceasefire agreements have been signed with Qarfa, Kammunah, Dayr al-Bukht and Aliqin in Dar'a governorate.

The number of populated areas that have joined the reconciliation process has increased to 1,419.

Negotiations on joining the ceasefire regime continued with armed opposition groups in Aleppo, Damascus, Hama, Homs and Qunaytirah governorates.

The number of armed groups that have announced their commitment to accepting and fulfilling the terms of the ceasefire of 27 February 2016 remains unchanged at 136.

The number of populated areas which the Syrian government forces have liberated from armed groups of the international terrorist organization Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) since 1 January 2017 has increased to 213.

Over the past 24 hours, government forces have gained control of 34.8 square kilometres. A total area of 3,607.7 square kilometres has been liberated.

Observance of the ceasefire regime

At 0000 hours on 30 December 2016, a ceasefire came into force in accordance with the consolidated agreement on a comprehensive resolution of the Syrian crisis.

The number of Syrian opposition armed groups that have joined the ceasefire regime is 64.

Over the past 24 hours, the Russian representative office of the Russian and Turkish Joint Commission reviewing issues related to violations of the consolidated agreement has reported 11 violations in the following governorates: 6 in Damascus, 2 in Dar'a, 2 in Ladhiqiyah and 1 in Hama.

The Turkish representative office has reported 15 violations of the consolidated agreement in the following governorates: 4 in Hama, 4 in Idlib, 2 in Damascus, 2 in Dar'a, 2 in Ladhiqiyah and 1 in Homs.

The Russian representative office has been unable to confirm all 15 violations during its investigations of the incidents.

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General Assembly
Security Council

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General Assembly
Seventy-first session
Agenda item 34
The situation in the Middle East

Security Council
Seventy-second year

Identical letters dated 23 March 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I transmit to you herewith a statistical summary of Israeli violations of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) committed during the month of February 2017 (see annex).

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 34, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Nawaf **Salam**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

17-05334 (E) 070417 100417

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Annex to the identical letters dated 23 March 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Land violations committed in February 2016

Date	*Time*	*Nature of violation*
1 February	0800	Inside occupied Palestinian territory, opposite the town of Mays al-Jabal and points B-64 and BP-31 in the Kurum al-Sharaqi area, a D-9 bulldozer, two Merkava tanks and 10 Israeli enemy soldiers crossed the technical fence. The tanks and soldiers took up combat positions while the bulldozer levelled and marked a road about 500 metres long and four metres wide, and raised two earthen berms five metres long and two metres high for the two tanks, without violating the Blue Line. The work ended at 1030 hours, and the vehicles and soldiers left in the direction of occupied territory.
	0915	From inside occupied Palestinian territory, opposite point B-22 and the town of Rumaysh, a Bobcat vehicle crossed the technical fence, escorted by a Humvee military vehicle and four Israeli enemy soldiers. The Bobcat worked on widening and smoothing the dirt road, without violating the Blue Line. The work ended at 1230 hours, and the vehicles and soldiers left in the direction of occupied territory.
6 February	0900-1445	Two Israeli enemy trench-diggers reinforced earthen berms at the Ramta and Zabdin posts inside the occupied Shab'a Farms.
8 February	1400	Opposite the Udaysah-Kafr Killa road, an Israeli enemy patrol comprising two Hummer vehicles, a Defender vehicle and a construction vehicle fitted with communications equipment approached. Nine soldiers disembarked with a robot and inspected the road running along the technical fence. One of the soldiers pointed his weapon at members of a Lebanese Army patrol that was observing the activity from the Lebanese side.
9 February	0900-1630	Inside the occupied Shab'a Farms, an Israeli enemy trench-digger cut a road in the area around the Ramta post, while an enemy patrol deployed in the surrounding area.
11 February	1600	In the Bastarah area on the outskirts of the town of Shab'a, while the civilian Isma'il Zahrah was herding livestock, an Israeli enemy patrol threw a smoke bomb inside the occupied Shab'a Farms across from his location, without any injury.
18 February	1315	Two explosions were heard inside the occupied Shab'a Farms between the Ramta and Sammaqah posts.
21 February	1240-1250	On the outskirts of the town of Ayta al-Sha'b, near Israeli enemy position W-413-A, three Israeli enemy soldiers made offensive gestures at soldiers at the Lebanese Army position at that location.

Date	Time	Nature of violation
23 February	1047-1111	Opposite the town of Mays al-Jabal, near point B-64/1, two Israeli enemy soldiers pointed their weapons at Lebanese Army soldiers located on the other side.
27 February	0640	In the Bastarah area at the entrance to the occupied Shab'a Farms, an Israeli enemy bulldozer escorted by two Merkava tanks and 15 enemy soldiers removed cement blocks that had been placed at the location and installed a yellow iron gate. The work ended at 0800 hours, and the patrol left in the direction of occupied territory.
	0930	From inside occupied Palestinian territory, opposite Hula at the Shaykh Abbad position, an Israeli enemy vehicle pointed a pole-mounted camera at Lebanese territory. At 1720 hours, the vehicle left in the direction of occupied territory.
	–	At the entrance to the occupied Bastrah Farm, the Israeli enemy installed a second yellow iron gate near the post of the Indian contingent of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon.

Sea violations committed in February 2016

Date	Time	Nature of violation
2 February	1100	Off Ra's al-Naqurah, an Israeli enemy military launch violated the southern maritime boundary established by Decree No. 6433 (2011) of 1 October 2011 for a 17-minute period, and proceeded on its way for some 370 metres. The launch then left in the direction of occupied Palestinian territorial waters.
	1125	Off Ra's al-Naqurah, two Israeli enemy military launches violated the southern maritime boundary established by Decree No. 6433 (2011), the first for a 15-minute period and the second for a 24-minute period, and proceeded on their way for some 390 metres. The launches then left in the direction of occupied Palestinian territorial waters.
	1515	Off Ra's al-Naqurah, two Israeli enemy military launches violated the southern maritime boundary established by Decree No. 6433 (2011) for an eight-minute period, and proceeded on their way for some 150 metres. The launches then left in the direction of occupied Palestinian territorial waters.
3 February	0927	Off Ra's al-Naqurah, an Israeli enemy military launch violated the southern maritime boundary established by Decree No. 6433 (2011) for a six-minute period, and proceeded on its way for some 370 metres. The launch then left in the direction of occupied Palestinian territorial waters.
5 February	0300-0320	Opposite Ra's al-Naqurah, from its position at Ra's al-Naqurah, the Israeli enemy directed a searchlight towards Lebanese territorial waters for two periods of 30 seconds and 40 seconds, respectively.

Date	*Time*	*Nature of violation*
	0438	Off Ra's al-Naqurah, two Israeli enemy military launches violated the southern maritime boundary established by Decree 6433 (2011) for a six-minute period, and proceeded on their way for some 220 metres inside Lebanese territorial waters. Their crews also directed a searchlight towards said waters for a four-minute period. The launches then left in the direction of occupied Palestinian territorial waters.
	1628	Off Ra's al-Naqurah, two Israeli enemy military launches violated the southern maritime boundary established by Decree No. 6433 (2011) for a five-minute period, and proceeded on its way for some 300 metres. The launches then left in the direction of occupied Palestinian territorial waters.
7 February	0842	Off Ra's al-Naqurah, an Israeli enemy military launch violated the southern maritime boundary established by Decree No. 6433 (2011) for a period of four hours and 33 minutes, and proceeded on its way for some 555 metres several times. It dragged the third buoy 20 metres south of its previous location. The launch's crew also made several dives inside Lebanese territorial waters. The launch then left in the direction of occupied Palestinian territorial waters.
	1133	Off Ra's al-Naqurah, an Israeli enemy military launch violated the southern maritime boundary established by Decree No. 6433 (2011) for a period of one hour and 42 minutes, and proceeded on its way for some 555 metres. The launch then left in the direction of occupied Palestinian territorial waters.
12 February	1630	Off Ra's al-Naqurah, an Israeli enemy military launch violated the southern maritime boundary established by Decree No. 6433 (2011) for a two-minute period, and proceeded on its way for some 205 metres. The launch then left in the direction of occupied Palestinian territorial waters.
19 February	1620	Off Ra's al-Naqurah, an Israeli enemy military launch violated the southern maritime boundary established by Decree No. 6433 (2011) for a three-minute period, and proceeded on its way for some 205 metres. The launch then left in the direction of occupied Palestinian territorial waters.
	2047	From inside occupied Palestinian territorial waters off Ra's al-Naqurah, an Israeli enemy military launch directed a searchlight towards Lebanese territorial waters for a one-minute period.
22 February	1213	Opposite Ra's al-Naqurah, an Israeli enemy military launch violated the southern maritime boundary established by Decree 6433 (2011) for a period of one hour and four minutes, and proceeded on its way for some 350 metres into Lebanese territorial waters. The launch then left in the direction of occupied Palestinian territorial waters.
	1330	Off Ra's al-Naqurah, an Israeli enemy military launch violated the southern maritime boundary established by Decree No. 6433 (2011) for a 25-minute period, and proceeded on its way for some 460 metres. The launch then left in the direction of occupied Palestinian territorial waters.

Date	*Time*	*Nature of violation*
23 February	1000	Off Ra's al-Naqurah, inside occupied Palestinian waters, an Israeli enemy military launch fired medium military-weapon rounds into the air.
25 February	0405-0410	From inside occupied Palestinian territorial waters off Ra's al-Naqurah, an Israeli enemy military launch directed a searchlight towards Lebanese territorial waters for two periods of one minute each, and broadcast over loudspeakers in Hebrew for 30 seconds.
	0405	Opposite Ra's al-Naqurah, the Israeli enemy directed a searchlight from its Ra's al-Naqurah position towards Lebanese territorial waters for a period of 20 seconds.
27 February	0414	Off Ra's al-Naqurah, from inside occupied Palestinian territorial waters, an Israeli enemy military launch fired a flare over Lebanese territorial waters.
	0503-0516	Opposite Ra's al-Naqurah, the Israeli enemy directed a searchlight from its Ra's al-Naqurah position towards Lebanese territorial waters for a period of one minute.

Air violations committed in February 2016

Date	*Time*	*Nature of violation*
1 February	1025	Two Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Kafr Killa. They circled over all regions of Lebanon before leaving at 1135 hours over Alma al-Sha'b.
	2210	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Alma al-Sha'b. It circled over the South before leaving at 2300 hours over Alma al-Sha'b.
2 February	0115	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over the occupied Shab'a Farms. It circled over the South and the Western Bekaa before leaving at 0600 hours over Alma al-Sha'b.
	0835	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over the occupied Shab'a Farms. It circled over the South and the Western Bakaa before leaving at 1025 hours over Kafr Killa.
	1035	Two Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Aytarun. They circled over all regions of Lebanon before leaving at 1200 hours over the sea off Naqurah.
	1215	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Alma al-Sha'b. It circled over the South and the Western Bekaa before leaving at 1940 hours over Alma al-Sha'b.

Date	*Time*	*Nature of violation*
3 February	0740	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Naqurah. It circled over the South, Beirut and its suburbs, Matn, Kasrawan and Jubayl before leaving at 1330 hours over Naqurah.
4 February	0905	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Alma al-Sha'b. It circled over the South and the Shuf before leaving at 1500 hours over Rumaysh.
	1115	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Rumaysh. It circled over the South before leaving at 2110 hours over Alma al-Sha'b.
5 February	0605	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Alma al-Sha'b. It circled over the South before leaving at 1935 hours over Kafr Killa.
6 February	0825	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese territory, entering over Kafr Killa. It circled over the South and the Western Bekaa before leaving at 1415 hours over Rumaysh.
7 February	0805	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese territory, entering over Kafr Killa. It circled over the South and the Western Bakaa before leaving at 1420 hours over Kafr Killa.
	1015	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese territory, entering over Aytarun. It circled over the South, the Western Bekaa, Riyaq, Hirmil and Akkar before leaving at 2235 hours over Alma al-Sha'b.
	1225	Two Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Rumaysh. They circled over all regions of Lebanon before leaving at 1350 hours over the sea west of Naqurah.
8 February	0800	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Alma al-Sha'b. It circled over the South before leaving at 1105 hours over Rumaysh.
9 February	1030	Two Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Kafr Killa. They circled over all regions of Lebanon before leaving at 1200 hours over Alma al-Sha'b.
	1130	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Alma al-Sha'b. It circled over Beirut and its suburbs and the South before leaving at 1950 hours over Rumaysh.
	1350	An Israeli enemy helicopter violated Lebanese airspace. It circled over the occupied Shab'a Farms before leaving at 1722 hours into the occupied Shab'a Farms.
	2200	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Rumaysh. It circled over the South before leaving at 1420 hours into occupied territory.

Date	*Time*	*Nature of violation*
10 February	2140	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Naqurah. It circled over Beirut and its suburbs before leaving at 0720 hours on 11 February 2017 over Naqurah.
14 February	1050	Two Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Rumaysh. They circled over all regions of Lebanon before leaving at 1225 hours over the sea west of Naqurah.
15 February	1530	Two Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over the sea west of Shikka. They left at 1545 hours over Rumaysh. .
17 February	0630	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Alma al-Sha'b. It circled over the South before leaving at 1800 hours over Rumaysh.
	1525	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese territory, entering over Kafr Killa. It circled over Western Bekaa and the South before leaving at 1925 hours over Alma al-Sha'b.
	1720	An Israeli enemy helicopter violated Lebanese airspace. It circled over the Bastrah area on the outskirts of Kafr Shuba before leaving at 1722 hours into the occupied Shab'a Farms.
20 February	0605	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Alma al-Sha'b. It circled over the South before leaving at 1500 hours over Rumaysh.
	1230	Two Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Kafr Killa. They circled over all regions of Lebanon before leaving at 1400 hours over Alma al-Sha'b.
21 February	0610	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Alma al-Sha'b. It circled over Riyaq, Baalbek and the South before leaving at 2320 hours over Alma al-Sha'b.
	0710	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Alma al-Sha'b. It circled over the South, Hirmil and Akkar before leaving at 1400 hours over Kafr Killa.
22 February	0635	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Naqurah. It circled over Beirut and its suburbs, Ba'abda and the South before leaving at 1930 hours over Alma al-Sha'b.
	0810	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Naqurah. It circled over the Shuf, the Western Bekaa and the South before leaving at 1140 hours over Kafr Killa.
	0900	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Alma al-Sha'b. It circled over the South before leaving at 1205 hours over Rumaysh.

Date	*Time*	*Nature of violation*
23 February	0730	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Kafr Killa. It circled over the Shuf, the Western Bekaa and the South before leaving at 1140 hours over Kafr Killa.
	0800	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Naqurah. It circled over Riyaq and Baalbek before leaving at 1140 hours over Kafr Killa.
	1125	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Naqurah. It circled over Beirut and its suburbs, Iqlim al-Kharrub and Jubayl before leaving at 1650 hours over Naqurah.
24 February	1700	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Alma al-Sha'b. It circled over the South before leaving at 0600 hours on 25 February 2017 over Rumaysh.
26 February	0745	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Alma al-Sha'b. It circled over the South before leaving at 1910 hours over Aytarun.
	0910	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Naqurah. It circled over the Shuf, the South, Beirut and its suburbs, Jubayl and Batrun before leaving at 1530 hours over Naqurah.
	0950	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Naqurah. It circled over Beirut and its suburbs, Arz, Hirmil and Akkar before leaving at 1710 hours over Kafr Killa.
	1020	Two Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Kafr Killa. They circled over all regions of Lebanon before leaving at 1245 hours over the sea west of Naqurah.
	1100	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Naqurah. It circled over the Shuf and the South before leaving at 1510 hours over Kafr Killa.
27 February	1225	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Naqurah. It circled over the Western Bekaa and the South before leaving at 2310 hours over Alma al-Sha'b.
	1325	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese territory, entering over Kafr Killa. It circled over the Western Bekaa before leaving at 1720 hours over Rumaysh.
	1330	Two Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over the sea west of Sidon. They circled over all regions of Lebanon before leaving at 1345 hours over the sea west of Shikka.
28 February	1515	Two Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Kafr Killa. They circled over all regions of Lebanon before leaving at 1630 hours over Alma al-Sha'b.

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Security Council

Distr.: General
6 April 2017
English
Original: Arabic

Identical letters dated 3 April 2017 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, and further to previous letters regarding grave and recurring violations by Turkey of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic, I should like to inform you of fresh violations of Syrian sovereignty that have been committed by the Turkish regime and of the regime's continuing support for terrorism and the threat it poses to international peace and security.

The Turkish regime has laid the groundwork for the construction of a new city inside Syrian territory, in the area of Nadah, north of Bab city, Aleppo governorate. That area is currently occupied by Turkey with cooperation from the so-called Euphrates Shield terrorist forces. The Turkish regime intends for this city to be the first new city in the areas that Turkey occupies with the cooperation of terrorist groups affiliated with it.

In keeping with its confirmed violations of Syrian territorial integrity, the Turkish regime is exploiting the natural forces and flooding that have altered the course of the Afrin River in Syrian territory south-west of Jindayris in Aleppo governorate, in order to control several square kilometres of Syrian territory where the course of the river had changed. Barbed wire was brought to that territory and Turkish border guard stations were set up there.

On 5 March 2017, Turkish forces attacked the villages of Sakhrah and Skuzan, which are in Kassab district, Ladhiqiyah governorate, and cut down 300 pine and oak trees that covered a 15-dunum area of Syrian territory. The Turkish forces stole those trees and took them into Turkish territory.

On 13 March 2017, Turkish military forces, backed by armoured vehicles and vehicles equipped with heavy machine guns, infiltrated Syrian territory near the village of Jaflah, which is part of Shaykh al-Hadid district in the Afrin area, Aleppo governorate, and cut down hundreds of olive trees belonging to Syrian civilians from the area, with a view to building a barrier wall. Turkish military forces also infiltrated Syrian territory near the town of Dayk Madash, which is located in Shiran district north of the city of Afrin in Aleppo governorate, and proceeded to assemble on a tall hill overlooking the entire region. Turkish military forces also occupied Syrian territory near the villages of Fawz and Hita in the area of Jisr al-Shughur in Idlib governorate, where they carried out excavation work and built a road and a barrier wall.

The Turkish regime recently formed two new terrorist organizations, which it has named Coastal Shield and Orontes Shield; it grants Turkish citizenship as well as a monthly stipend of $400 to each terrorist who joins either of those terrorist groups. Turkish military forces have occupied large swathes of Syrian territory near Uqayribat and in the town of Atmah in Idlib governorate, where they bulldozed the soil and set up huge training camps for the aforementioned terrorist organizations.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic strongly condemns the Turkish Government's continued attacks on the Syrian people and Syrian sovereignty. It once again calls on the Security Council to fulfil its responsibility to preserve international peace and security and put an end to the Turkish regime's outrageous violations of the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations, international law and all Security Council resolutions on Syria and counter-terrorism, as well as the regime's violation of the principles of friendly relations and good-neighbourliness among States endorsed by the General Assembly. The Turkish Government must be held accountable for those violations. It must also be compelled to halt its support for terrorism and immediately implement Security Council resolutions on counter-terrorism.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Mounzer **Mounzer**
Minister Plenipotentiary
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

United Nations S/2017/281

Security Council

Distr.: General
5 April 2017
English
Original: Arabic

Identical letters dated 4 April 2017 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

The band of armed terrorist groups active in the Khan Shaykhun area, along with their regional and Western masters and their media affiliates, have spread news regarding a poison gas attack in the town of Khan Shaykhun, in Idlib governorate. As usual, and as has been their habit over the last four years, those parties have concocted accusations against the armed forces of the Syrian Arab Republic.

The Syrian Arab Republic categorically denies having used poison gases in Khan Shaykhun or in any other Syrian town or village. The Syrian Arab Army does not have any type of chemical weapons, has not used them in the past, will not use them in the future, and is making no attempt whatsoever to acquire them. Indeed, the Syrian Arab Army has not used such weapons even in its fiercest battles against the armed terrorist organizations.

The Syrian Arab Republic stresses that, since it acceded to the Chemical Weapons Convention in 2013, it has implemented all of its obligations under the Convention. Rather, the armed terrorist groups and their masters are the ones who contrived those and other events with a view to subsequently accusing the Syrian State of being responsible for them. Over the last few years, the Syrian Arab Republic has provided the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, the Security Council in New York and a number of allied States with detailed and accurate data. In particular, over the last few weeks, it has submitted memorandums stating that armed terrorist groups were bringing poisonous substances into Syria, including Idlib governorate, from such neighbouring States as Turkey, with a view to using them in the future.

The band of State sponsors of terrorism, including the President of the Turkish regime, the ministers for foreign affairs of certain European States hostile to Syria, and the media that work at their behest, immediately scrambled to mount a new campaign against Syria. This shows that they have an underlying scheme, namely, to turn back the clock, reopen the so-called Syrian chemical issue and start it from scratch. The aim is to cover up the crimes of the terrorist groups and to conceal their lack of good faith in the discussions that have taken place in Astana and Geneva. The discussions have demonstrated that the groups have no genuine desire to reach a peaceful solution to the Syrian crisis. This latest campaign comes after the Syrian Arab Army and allied and supporting forces achieved several victories in their war on terror over the last few days and weeks. These calumnies also precede a European Union meeting on Syria, which is due to take place tomorrow. Their

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purpose is therefore to launch a campaign against Syria and justify the hostile decisions that will be taken at the meeting.

Once again, the Syrian Arab Republic strongly condemns the crime committed by armed terrorist groups in Khan Shaykhun. This crime is, moreover, part of a shabby ploy for political gain to the detriment of the children and women of our Syrian people. The Syrian Arab Republic condemns the use of such poisonous substances by any party, anywhere, under any conditions, and for any reason. The Syrian Arab Republic emphasizes that none of those fabricated claims will deter it from pursuing its war against terrorism, its organizations and its supporters in Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and certain States members of the European Union, or from working to reach a peaceful solution to the Syrian crisis. Syria calls on the international community to support its counter-terrorism efforts and reject these latest trumped-up allegations, which are the work of parties that have no concern for the welfare or peace of Syria or Syrians.

(*Signed*) Mounzer **Mounzer**
Minister Counsellor
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

United Nations S/2017/282

Security Council

Distr.: General
4 April 2017

Original: English

Letter dated 4 April 2017 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I refer to operative paragraph 13 of Security Council resolution 2333 (2016), in which the Council requested me to prepare, within 90 days from the adoption of the resolution, a report that sets out a well-developed peacebuilding plan to direct the role of the United Nations system and other relevant partners in supporting the transition of Liberia. The Council also emphasized, in this regard, the important convening role of the Peacebuilding Commission in the process of developing the plan.

I am pleased to share with you herewith the above-mentioned plan, as well as a transmittal letter dated 20 March 2017 from Marjon Vashti Kamara, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Liberia, and Farid Zarif, my Special Representative for Liberia and Head of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) (see annex).

The plan was developed through an intensive consultative process led by UNMIL, in close coordination with the Government of Liberia and international partners, as well as Liberian political parties and civil society organizations. Its broad national ownership will ensure the continued commitment of the stakeholders to the plan following the assumption of authority by a new Government subsequent to the October 2017 general elections.

The plan is fully aligned with the peacebuilding priorities of Liberia, which are provided in an annex to the plan, as reflected in the Agenda for Transformation, as well as the statement of mutual commitments on peacebuilding in Liberia, concluded on 19 April 2016 by the Government of Liberia and the Peacebuilding Commission, and other similar frameworks.

The plan provides a timetable for the transition of Liberia. Phase I runs until March 2018 and specifies concrete steps to be taken to ensure successful completion of the mandate of the Mission by that date. During phase II, which begins in April 2018, longer-term peacebuilding priorities will be integrated into development frameworks to support national efforts to mitigate and prevent conflict. The plan was informed by the initial findings of the ongoing capacity-mapping exercise for the United Nations country team, which indicate that the departure of UNMIL will result in a reduced United Nations technical capacity to support peacebuilding and conflict prevention. In this regard, I encourage the Security Council to consider proposals in the peacebuilding plan to help sustain the peace agenda in Liberia.

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The plan was facilitated through tripartite cooperation between the United Nations, the World Bank and the European Union, as well as thorough consultations with the Peacebuilding Commission.

It is important to underline that the plan contains specific provisions related to the support to be provided by the Economic Community of West African States, as well as the World Bank. We also look forward to active engagement by other regional and subregional organizations, including the African Union.

The plan constitutes another important step in the transition of Liberia, and I congratulate the Government of Liberia, UNMIL and other partners for their impressive efforts. The plan provides for a robust and specific framework of cooperation between the United Nations and the wider international community in support of the Government of Liberia and other national stakeholders. If successfully implemented, this plan could serve as a model in other similar post-conflict situations.

I would be grateful if you could bring this letter and its annex to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) António **Guterres**

Annex

Letter dated 20 March 2017 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Liberia and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Liberia and Head of the United Nations Mission in Liberia addressed to the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations

Please find attached the final draft of the peacebuilding plan for Liberia, which was developed pursuant to Security Council resolution 2333 (2016). The plan has been fully endorsed by the Government of Liberia and was developed in close consultation with national stakeholders and international partners.

The plan is the result of an extensive consultative process led by the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and the Liberia Peacebuilding Office. A core component of the consultative process was the establishment of the Reference Group, which was comprised of senior representatives of Government ministries, agencies and commissions, the National Civil Society Council of Liberia, UNMIL, the United Nations country team and the donor community. The Reference Group guided the formulation of the peacebuilding priority areas identified in the plan, building upon the Agenda for Transformation, the statement of mutual commitments on peacebuilding in Liberia and other peace consolidation frameworks. Consultations with bilateral and multilateral actors further defined areas of ongoing assistance to national peacebuilding priorities, which were also factored into the plan. Finally, all registered political parties and civil society groups were consulted extensively to ensure collective and ongoing commitment to the plan. As such, we anticipate that the new administration, which takes office in January 2018, will support the continued implementation of the plan.

The drafting process was assisted by the deployment to Monrovia in February of a Headquarters team comprised of representatives of the United Nations, the World Bank and the European Union. This team helped clarify issues and develop the plan's framework and articulation.

We believe that this plan will help establish a robust framework of collaboration between the Government and national stakeholders, on the one hand, and the United Nations and the wider international community, on the other, to sustain peace in Liberia. We hope that it will be an example for other post-conflict societies around the world.

(*Signed*) Marjon V. **Kamara**
Minister for Foreign Affairs
Republic of Liberia

(*Signed*) Farid **Zarif**
Under-Secretary-General
Head of UNMIL

Sustaining peace and securing development: Liberia peacebuilding plan

Final draft

I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 2333 (2016), the Security Council requested the Secretary-General to prepare, within 90 days of the adoption of the resolution, a report that sets out a well-developed peacebuilding plan to direct the role of the United Nations system and other relevant partners, including multilateral and bilateral actors, in supporting the transition of Liberia. In response to the request by the Council, the present peacebuilding plan has been developed jointly by the United Nations system in Liberia and the Government of Liberia in collaboration with national and international stakeholders. Success in sustaining peace depends on national stakeholders building a common vision of society, in which peacebuilding is a shared responsibility of all Liberians, supported by the international community.

2. The plan builds on the long-standing engagement by the international community to support the post-war recovery of Liberia and ongoing donor assistance programmes in the country. It identifies key actions that must be taken before 30 March 2018, when the substantive mandate of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) ends, and outlines the level of political engagement that will be required thereafter to ensure the sustainability of peace. The plan provides a framework for the continued role of the United Nations country team during and especially after the transition process.

3. In order to be successful, the peacebuilding plan will require improved integration and coherence of United Nations agencies, funds and programmes in the design and delivery of peacebuilding outcomes. In this context, United Nations system approaches to delivering as one will help to overcome bureaucratic and administrative inefficiencies and promote partnership arrangements that fully align projects supported by the United Nations and programmes and investments made by international donors with the priorities of the Government of Liberia. This collective endeavour will extend to ensuring ongoing analysis and assessment of the transition process in partnership with the World Bank Group, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and other international partners.

II. Objective

4. Peacebuilding in Liberia must maintain the momentum of the last 14 years, even as the country undergoes two transitions: the election of a new Government in October 2017 and the end of the UNMIL mandate on 30 March 2018. The present plan provides a well-developed framework for sustaining peace, formulated in accordance with Security Council resolution 2333 (2016), and directs the role of the United Nations system and other relevant partners in supporting the transition of Liberia during the drawdown of UNMIL and beyond, as stipulated in the resolution.

5. The peacebuilding plan takes inspiration from Security Council resolution 2282 (2016), in which the Council stresses the importance of promoting "an integrated, strategic and coherent approach to peacebuilding, noting that security, development and human rights are closely interlinked and mutually reinforcing". The plan consolidates commitments across development, security and human rights operations, and defines priority areas for mutual engagement in order to prevent relapse into conflict, continue reform efforts, promote reconciliation, strengthen the security environment and lay the foundations for conflict-sensitive development.

6. Without prejudice to the primary responsibility of the Government of Liberia for the welfare of its population, the plan is an expression of the partnership between the Government, the United Nations system, bilateral and multilateral actors and all Liberian political and civil society stakeholders. In this context, it recognizes the Peacebuilding Commission as an intergovernmental advisory body with the function of bringing sustained international attention to sustaining peace and providing political accompaniment and advocacy to countries affected by conflict, with their consent (see Security Council resolution 2282 (2016), para. 4). The Government led the development of the plan, which is in line with its efforts to design and implement solutions to peacebuilding challenges. In this regard, the peacebuilding plan establishes a basis for harmonizing peacebuilding operations with long-term national plans and strategies, including through the Agenda for Transformation.

III. Context

7. The country's post-war recovery efforts are characterized by several major achievements, including the transfer of security responsibilities from UNMIL to the Government on 30 June 2016 and the conduct of peaceful presidential elections in 2005 and 2011 and legislative elections in 2011 and 2014. These successes have been accompanied by important national policy initiatives such as Liberia Rising: Vision 2030; the Agenda for Transformation (2012-2017); the Strategic Road Map for National Healing, Peacebuilding and Reconciliation (2013-2030); and the start of a constitutional review process and draft legislation related to the justice and security sectors, land rights and administration, local governance, decentralization and civil service reform.

8. Liberia also enjoys a much-improved subregional situation and does not currently face any threats from neighbouring countries. With peace and stability in Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Sierra Leone, it is likely that the regional situation will continue to be propitious for the continuation of peace in Liberia. As UNMIL continues to phase out, Liberia is taking advantage of this favourable regional situation to strengthen its place within the subregional organizations, including the Mano River Union and ECOWAS, as well as the African Union. In this connection, Liberia is currently successfully carrying out the functions of the Chair of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS. Other areas of subregional collaboration could involve further enhancement of the cross-border strategy for security of the Mano River Union, while Liberia could look to ECOWAS to provide security guarantees should the situation so require, as recently demonstrated by decisive ECOWAS action in the Gambia.

9. Notwithstanding the many gains made in maintaining national peace and security in Liberia, issues identified as root causes of the country's 14-year civil war remain unaddressed. Public institutional reforms are urgently required, with an emphasis on the effective implementation of the national legislative agenda. In addition, recent assessments show that land disputes, corruption, boundary disputes and concession-related tensions continue to be the main triggers of violence. The lives of many women are particularly insecure owing to societal inequality and sexual and gender-based violence, further weakening social cohesion in communities. Low commodity prices for primary exports and the outbreak of the Ebola virus disease have limited economic growth, undermining high expectations for a speedy post-war recovery and the delivery of peace dividends.

10. These challenges are compounded by limited capacities in the security and rule of law sectors, slow progress in national reconciliation and limited progress in implementing critical government reforms. Relations between the executive branch of the Government and society have improved, but remain strained, owing to the absence of meaningful national reconciliation and a low level of public confidence in justice and security institutions, whose presence remains limited outside of Monrovia. Sustaining peace in Liberia requires long-term investment in national institutions that are inclusive, accountable and responsive, with a Government that is committed to providing opportunities and services to all Liberians.

IV. Guiding principles

11. The peacebuilding plan is guided by the following principles:

(a) **Inclusive national ownership**. The peacebuilding plan and its implementation modalities are rooted in extensive consultation with the Government of Liberia, political parties and civil society;[1]

(b) **Strategic peacebuilding priorities**. The peacebuilding plan establishes priorities in a number of critical transition areas, in particular the rule of law, human rights and the security sector, while laying the foundations for a longer-term approach;

(c) **Establishment of a consensus-based approach to conflict sensitivity**. The peacebuilding plan defines mutually agreed criteria for the prioritization and selection of commitments by the Government of Liberia and its international partners based on human rights principles;

(d) **Consolidation and reaffirmation of commitments**. The plan does not replace existing strategies and plans, but rather consolidates and reaffirms mutual commitments identified by the Government of Liberia and international partners over the past years;

[1] In February 2017, two consultations were held with representatives of Liberian political parties and one consultation was held with civil society leaders in Monrovia. Civil society was formally represented in the Reference Group formed to guide the process to draft the peacebuilding plan, which also included representatives of the Government of Liberia, the international community, the World Bank and the United Nations system.

(e) **Ensuring the transparent, timely and predictable use of aid**. The plan rests on the commitment of the Government of Liberia and donors to ensure the transparent, timely and predictable use of aid to support these priorities through information-sharing and regular and frank policy dialogue;

(f) **Strategic communications**. UNMIL and the Government of Liberia will employ strategic communications as a vehicle for increasing public awareness and managing expectations with respect to the transition process. This effort should ensure that Liberians understand the commitments, roles and responsibilities of the Government, the United Nations system and international partners in implementing the peacebuilding plan. The mode of communication should be appropriate and, where necessary, utilize Liberian English or local languages.

V. Structure of the plan

12. The peacebuilding plan creates a timetable for the transition of Liberia, defined by the election process in October 2017, the assumption of office by a new Government in January 2018 and the closure of UNMIL in March 2018.

13. The peacebuilding plan establishes an agreed road map for immediate action to be undertaken as part of a successful transition, while establishing directional guidance for achievement of a peaceful, just and inclusive society based on the rule of law and respect for human rights and in line with the broader goal of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 through a diversified and decentralized economic model based on the local market, sustainable agriculture, agro-industry and small and medium-sized enterprises.

14. The plan will have two phases:

(a) Phase I, which will run from April 2017 to March 2018, includes the activities required during the next 12 months to ensure a successful transition. It entails the actions required of the United Nations system in support of the commitment by the Government of Liberia to develop the durable national capacities critical for sustaining peace before the departure of UNMIL;

(b) Phase II will commence in April 2018 and will last for a period to be determined by the new Government, but in principle will not extend beyond 2020, which is the year that the envisioned midterm review of the Agenda for Transformation II is to take place.[2] During this phase, longer-term peacebuilding priorities will be integrated into the development frameworks necessary to ensure ongoing support to national efforts to mitigate, prevent and manage risks of conflict. In support of this work, collaborative efforts will be undertaken to ensure the establishment of effective early warning capacities, as well as to put in place a baseline of agreed risk and resilience analysis in support of conflict-sensitive development planning.

[2] Current planning for the Agenda for Transformation II is under way, with final approval to be completed by the new Government in 2018 and a midterm review scheduled for 2020. The current World Bank country partnership framework, 2018-2022, is also scheduled for a midterm review in 2020.

15. In the transition between the two phases, particular attention will be paid to the political and operational transition to be undertaken by both the Government of Liberia and the United Nations system during the immediate post-electoral period. During this time, dedicated assistance and engagement will be undertaken to ensure that the United Nations system and partners are responsive to the priorities set by the new Government.

16. Phase I actions have been agreed by the Government of Liberia, the United Nations system and other participants involved in the formulation of the peacebuilding plan. Indicative priorities for phase II have been agreed, with a review of the priorities and United Nations system support, led jointly by the newly elected Government, the United Nations and international partners, to begin before the departure of UNMIL.

17. The two phases of the plan will help to govern the sequence of United Nations interventions and the milestones required to support the Government of Liberia in addressing the country's peacebuilding needs. The sequencing of actions has been determined through the application of the following criteria:

- Will the activity have an immediate and visible impact on sustaining peaceful transition and/or addressing collectively identified risk and resilience factors?
- Will the activity directly target the poorest and most vulnerable population groups and households and/or the most disenfranchised parts of the country?
- Can the activity be implemented in the planned time frame given existing implementation capacities (national and international) and available resources?
- Does the activity establish essential systems and/or enable the foundational reforms required to build national capacity?

VI. United Nations plan to support national peacebuilding priorities and the process of transition through March 2018

18. During phase I of the peacebuilding plan, the United Nations system will support the Government of Liberia in establishing the necessary conditions for a free and fair electoral process and a smooth democratic transition following the presidential elections in October 2017. Without prejudice to the range of ongoing programmes being supported by the United Nations system, phase I of the peacebuilding plan outlines critical actions required for a peaceful election process, national reconciliation, delivery of the Government's legislative programme and the deconcentration of public services. The United Nations system will build on the existing partnership with the Government of Liberia and implement peacebuilding priorities through the lens of the Agenda for Transformation, the statement of mutual commitments on peacebuilding in Liberia and other pertinent policy frameworks.

19. Preventing conflict will be central to the United Nations system's support to two parallel processes of transition. During the first transition process, the United Nations will focus on facilitating a peaceful and orderly transfer of political and administrative power from the current Government to a new administration, which will take office in January 2018. In the second transition process, the focus will be

on the departure of UNMIL and the engagement of the remaining United Nations entities with the new Government, whereby the United Nations country team will assume conflict prevention responsibilities through projects, programmes and advocacy. In the second transition process, the handover of UNMIL assets, both physical and intellectual, to the country team will be managed.

A. Peace consolidation priorities

Promoting inclusive and peaceful elections in 2017

20. The presidential and legislative elections to be held in October 2017 present an opportunity for Liberians to demonstrate their commitment to democracy and the consolidation of peace. Liberia is Africa's oldest republic, yet the 2017 elections will mark the first time in the country's history that a peaceful handover of political and administrative power from one democratically elected administration to another will take place in a process of competitive multiparty elections. It is inevitable that global attention will be drawn to this historic moment, and the conduct of the elections will testify to the political maturity of Liberians and the effectiveness of national and international efforts at post-conflict nation building.

21. The conduct of free, fair and transparent elections in 2017 depends largely on the stewardship role of the National Elections Commission, which must carry out its duties in an impartial, competent, and transparent manner. The Commission should also ensure that political parties and candidates running for office comply with the electoral rules and regulations. This can be achieved through the conclusion of a compact among political parties that commits them to carrying out an inclusive, peaceful elections process and supporting a well-ordered political transition. The credibility of the election results will depend on the level of participation by citizens and inclusivity, ensuring that youth, women and marginalized groups are fully involved in the national debate, and will require a robust voter education programme. All political aspirants and their respective political parties should publicly repudiate and condemn the heinous practice of ritual killings, which has marred earlier pre-election periods. The outgoing Government bears the responsibility for maintaining peace and security in connection with election activities and ensuring that the police, courts and prisons are prepared and adequately resourced to respond to law enforcement and legal challenges related to the elections.

22. In this context, the United Nations system will support the electoral process by concentrating efforts in the following areas:

(a) Forming a high-level crisis management forum designed to mitigate, prevent and manage potential election violence, made up of senior representatives of the Government, the United Nations system, ECOWAS and other bilateral and multilateral actors;

(b) Engaging the Government of Liberia and national stakeholders through the good offices of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to ensure a free, fair, peaceful and transparent electoral process;

(c) Supporting the efforts of the Government of Liberia to ensure an inclusive electoral process in 2017, with special attention to the observance of

human rights norms and standards, the full participation of women and youth in the planning and execution of the elections and the prevention of electoral violence;

(d) Providing technical, operational and financial support to the National Elections Commission through the elections programme supported the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Peace, security and the rule of law

23. While significant progress has been made in strengthening the rule of law in Liberia since conflict ended in 2003, real challenges remain in terms of access to justice, the effective and efficient administration of justice and ensuring equality before the law and accountability with respect to the law. Factors to be addressed include an outdated legal framework, poor oversight, weak administrative procedures and limited human and institutional capacity. The result is excessive delays, prolonged pre-trial detention, mistrials and limited progress in harmonizing the statutory and customary justice systems. Further developing the justice sector and improving public confidence in the rule of law is critical to sustaining peace and stability in Liberia. The Government recognizes these challenges and has expressed its commitment to taking forward, as a priority for its final year in office, nationally validated recommendations to address systemic weaknesses in the criminal justice system. Efforts to harmonize the statutory and customary justice systems will continue, although this will be a process stretching beyond phase I of the peacebuilding plan. Furthermore, it is recognized that effective election dispute resolution will be a key component in a smooth electoral process.

24. Significant progress has also been made in professionalizing the security sector in Liberia. The successful assumption of security responsibilities, in accordance with the deadline set by the Security Council, was a notable achievement. The priority for the sector in phase I will be to ensure effective security for the free, fair, transparent and safe conduct of the 2017 elections, in line with international human rights standards, and the transition to a new Government. Key components of elections security will include efforts to build trust with communities through an increased emphasis on community policing, efforts to increase operational effectiveness and countrywide deployments, and efforts to ensure that county security councils are operating effectively. A further priority will be implementation of the sector's legal and policy framework, including the operationalization of internal management and civilian oversight bodies. The strengthening of border management remains a further key component of security and stability. The resourcing of the security sector is an ever-present challenge, and a financial review will be undertaken to inform future budgetary allocations.

25. Liberians agree that national reconciliation is the vehicle for sustained conflict transformation and long-term stability. However, 14 years after the signing of the 2003 Comprehensive Peace Agreement there is limited progress towards addressing the root causes of Liberia's civil war. Many of the key recommendations in the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, issued in December 2009,[3] remain unrealized. Furthermore, the passage of key bills is critical to addressing the root causes of the fragmented State-society relations, but the slow pace of

[3] Available from http://trcofliberia.org/reports/final-report.

legislative reform hinders reconciliation. The peacebuilding plan seeks to re-energize national reconciliation in the final year of the current Government's tenure and establish the parameters for long-term national healing.

26. In line with Security Council resolutions 2171 (2014) and 2282 (2016), in which the Council recognized the primary responsibility of the Government of Liberia for sustaining peace, the United Nations will remain available to ensure early warning and conflict prevention for the purpose of sustaining peace, including through the employment of joint delivery mechanisms, such as the United Nations-World Bank Group Partnership for Fragile and Conflict-Affected Countries and Situations, the Joint Programme on Building National Capacities for Conflict Prevention and the Global Focal Point for Police, Justice and Corrections. During phase I of the peacebuilding plan, the United Nations will:

(a) Develop national capacity for and understanding of the protection of civilians, with a focus on the electoral period;

(b) Advise the Liberia National Police and other law enforcement agencies on effective planning for nationwide operational effectiveness with respect to elections security;

(c) Support the implementation of community-based policing to build trust between Liberian citizens and law enforcement agencies;

(d) Support the operationalization of county security councils as effective early warning and coordination mechanisms;

(e) Facilitate bilateral cooperation with Sierra Leone, Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire on border security and stabilization, in collaboration with regional and international partners;

(f) Advise the Government of Liberia on the effective implementation of the National Security Strategy, the Police Act, the Immigration Services Act and the Firearms and Ammunition Control Act;

(g) Advise the Government of Liberia on the implementation of nationally validated recommendations for justice sector reform;

(h) Support the Government of Liberia, in collaboration with the World Bank, in a public expenditure review of the security sector;

(i) Engage national stakeholders, including political parties, civil society and the National Elections Commission, in fostering peace and reconciliation beyond the elections;

(j) Provide advice to the Government on the revision of the Strategic Road Map for National Healing, Peacebuilding and Reconciliation;

(k) Support a national conference on reconciliation and assist in the roll-out of county reconciliation dialogues.

Economic transformation

27. There is broad consensus[4] that poverty and social and economic inequality were among the root causes of conflict in Liberia. The Government of Liberia, as a member of the Group of Seven Plus, recognizes that the country is among the world's most fragile and conflict-affected States. The legacy of war, its dependence on highly volatile primary commodities in the extractive sector and its exposure to a number of exogenous climate, conflict and disaster risks impose particular challenges for Liberia in its efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 and Agenda 2063 of the African Union.[5] Currently, the Government of Liberia is committed to costing a revised Agenda for Transformation, which will provide a road map for domesticating the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063.

28. The incremental progress in human development measures since 2003 has not been sufficient to reverse poverty, with Liberia's rate of development remaining below the average for countries in sub-Saharan Africa. The country's economy has stagnated in the period from 2014 to 2016, resulting in a decline in GDP per capita by an average of 2 per cent per annum. This is largely a result of the continued slump in global commodity prices and a negligible recovery in private capital inflows in the post-Ebola era. The leading iron ore concession companies, which had been the key drivers of growth in recent years, have either scaled back their operations or closed down, resulting in a decline in exports, job losses and a decline in government revenue.

29. In March 2017, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) reduced the 2016 economic growth estimate for Liberia to -1.2 per cent from its October 2016 estimate of -0.5 per cent. IMF anticipates that the Government of Liberia will face a significant budget shortfall, despite donor budget support of nearly $75 million for the financial year 2016/17.[6] While IMF projects economic growth of 2.5 to 3 per cent for the financial year 2017/18, this is still below the pre-Ebola growth rate of 7 per cent. Consequently, the fiscal out-turn for 2016/17 is estimated at $520 million, representing a 6 per cent decline compared with the out-turn for the fiscal year 2014/15.[7] Continuing weak revenues and declining donor resources in the 2017/18 fiscal year could force the Government to reduce spending by an additional 15 to 20 per cent. These factors have significant implications for domestic revenue mobilization, inflation and exchange rate stability during phase I of the peacebuilding plan and the transition to a new administration, with the likely prospect that the Government will lack resources to meet its commitments.

30. From this perspective, economic reform and development are critical for financing peacebuilding and remain long-term objectives of the plan. In phase I, the United Nations will help the Government to accelerate critical structural reforms and pro-poor policies aimed at private sector-led and shared economic growth.

[4] See the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (available from http://trcofliberia.org/reports/final-report) and the Agenda for Transformation (available from http://www.lr.undp.org/content/liberia/en/home/ourwork/library/liberia-agenda-for-transformation.html).

[5] See au.int/en2/agenda2063.

[6] Findings of the International Monetary Fund mission to Liberia, March 2017.

[7] Figures from the World Bank mission to Liberia, March 2017.

During this period, the United Nations system will support the establishment of a macroeconomic Research and Policy Unit in the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, including adequate technical and financial resources, and strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning to effectively track, align and harmonize aid coordination.

Governance and public institutions

31. Governance reform is central to building peace and promoting reconciliation in Liberia. The inadequacies and shortcomings of the governance framework have historically served as a source of conflict and contributed to enduring divisions in society. The centralization of political, social and economic power in Monrovia is entrenched in the Liberian Constitution (1847 and 1986), and the failure of this arrangement to provide for self-governance and service delivery institutions at the local level contributed to igniting the political, social and ethnic tensions that ultimately led to social unrest, political violence and civil war.

32. Progress in implementing the governance reform agenda has been slow. The Local Government Bill and the Land Rights Bill are still pending before the Legislature, and the Land Authority requires budgetary appropriations to become operational. The perception among many Liberians is that despite robust, inclusive and participatory dialogues, governance reform has been frustrated by a lack of political will. In this regard, the role of civil society needs to be strengthened to ensure that it can become an effective agent for social change and ensure the accountability of government policies.

33. United Nations system support to governance and public institutions remains crucial for structural reform and consolidating the peacebuilding achievements of past years. The United Nations role will be to help national stakeholders to deliver on the critical legislative package, accelerate the deconcentration of public services, help establish an effective land governance and administration system and help public institutions to restore the State's relationship of trust with its citizens.

34. During phase I of the peacebuilding plan, the United Nations will focus on the following areas:

(a) Advocating and supporting the passage of the Land Rights Bill and the Local Governance Bill and helping the Government to establish the regulatory framework to implement the Land Authority Act;

(b) Supporting the decentralization efforts of the Government and strengthening local government capacities to manage equitable and inclusive service delivery in all 15 counties;

(c) Advocating for the amendment of the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission Act of 2008;

(d) Supporting inclusive governance and accountability for results by enabling civil society (local non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations) to strengthen their watchdog and monitoring role.

Cross-cutting issues

35. The Government of Liberia is committed to ensuring that peacebuilding priorities are based on human rights principles, and is focused on strengthening the national protection system. Major human rights concerns include the high levels of sexual and gender-based violence, a lack of human rights protection in judicial proceedings and conflict between certain traditional practices and human rights norms. Key priorities in this regard include the implementation of the National Human Rights Action Plan; reinforcing and sustaining the engagement of Liberia with treaty bodies, special procedures of the Human Rights Council and the universal periodic review; domesticating international instruments into national law; and building the capacity of the Independent National Commission on Human Rights. The Government of Liberia will also seek to support the establishment of an office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Liberia to provide essential ongoing technical support to national human rights institutions and ensure sustainable relationships with regional and international human rights bodies.

36. With 79 per cent of its population under the age of 36,[8] the capturing of opportunities offered by a youthful population remains fundamental to national development and peacebuilding in Liberia. Today, high youth unemployment, limited access to quality education and the dearth of sustainable livelihood opportunities leave thousands of young people excluded from national life. Reform of the country's education system, so that young Liberians develop the skills to become productive citizens, must become a fundamental pillar of the sustaining peace agenda. Government leadership in youth development is currently focused on the passage and implementation of the National Youth Bill and opening regular channels of communication between young people and the authorities to encourage youth participation in promoting a peaceful electoral period.

37. Broad and equal participation of women and men across political and socioeconomic spheres remains critical to the consolidation of peace. Liberia is party to several international instruments on gender and peacebuilding, and the Government has adopted a national gender policy and a national action plan for implementing Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). Ensuring that women participate fully in the 2017 election process as candidates, voters and administrators is critical to advancing gender parity and helping women to have an equal voice in political decision-making and public policy formulation. The Government's commitment to apply gender-sensitive budgeting in the preparation of the 2017/18 budgets of ministries, agencies and commissions is a positive step in this direction.

38. Liberia is vulnerable to the impact of climate variability and change, which further exacerbate the country's socioeconomic development challenges. The fragility of ecosystems is exacerbated by human activity centred on the exploitation and competition for natural resources, which contributes to ongoing social tension and conflict. Accelerated economic recovery through the extraction of commodities carries inherent risks related to social cohesion, human rights and environmental

[8] Liberia, Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services, Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, National AIDS Control Programme and ICF International, *Liberia Demographic and Health Survey 2013* (Monrovia, 2014).

sustainability. Conflicts between foreign companies and local communities in concession areas underscore the fragile nature of peace consolidation in circumstances in which the commercial interest in exploiting ecosystem assets and human security priorities intersect.

39. United Nations support to human rights, youth development, gender equality and environmental sustainability is integral to the human security approach of the peacebuilding plan. The approach allows the United Nations system to promote a constructive relationship between duty bearers and rights holders[9] during the transition process through ongoing efforts by national and international stakeholders to sustain peace. In this context, the United Nations will prioritize its support in the following areas:

(a) Supporting human rights promotion, protection and monitoring activities in Liberia, with special attention to violations and abuses committed against children and women, by advising on and supporting the implementation and monitoring of the National Human Rights Action Plan and recommendations of the universal periodic review;

(b) Strengthening the capacity of the Independent National Commission on Human Rights to implement its mandate;

(c) Advocating and supporting the passage of the Affirmative Action Bill for Equitable Participation and Representation;

(d) Advocating and supporting the passage of the Domestic Violence Bill;

(e) Supporting efforts by the Government of Liberia to combat sexual and gender-based violence, including combating impunity for perpetrators of such crimes;

(f) Supporting the establishment of an office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Liberia by 1 April 2018;

(g) Supporting the Government's review of the National Youth Policy, promoting the passage of the National Youth Bill and helping to implement youth-related aspects of the Strategic Road Map for National Healing, Peacebuilding and Reconciliation;

(h) Supporting increased youth engagement and participation in governance and development processes at all levels in order to strengthen the rule of law, promote peacebuilding and prevent conflicts and violence, with special focus on ensuring that the 2017 elections are peaceful and successful;

(i) Developing and conducting a comprehensive assessment of the situation of youth in Liberia to inform joint youth policies and development interventions;

(j) Supporting vocational/technical training linked to the development of subject matter expertise and the enhancement of entrepreneurial skills and livelihood opportunities;

[9] Duty bearers are those actors who have a particular obligation or responsibility to respect, promote and realize human rights and to abstain from human rights violations. Rights holders are individuals or social groups that have particular entitlements in relation to specific duty bearers.

(k) Fully integrating a gender perspective into transition planning and putting the gender perspective at the centre of United Nations planning and programme development for the prevention and resolution of conflicts and peacebuilding;

(l) Reaffirming its commitment to allocating a minimum of 15 per cent of all United Nations peacebuilding funds to gender equality and the empowerment of women;

(m) Supporting the development of capacities for the sustainable management and utilization of natural resources, including lowland development, and ensuring that agriculture is adaptable to climate change.

B. Support for the political and administrative transfer of power following the 2017 elections

40. The post-electoral period will test the country's resilience during the transfer of political and administrative power and the ability of governance systems to continue to provide basic services to the people of Liberia. The objective of United Nations support is to ensure the smooth transition of power, the continuity of the operations and functioning of the civil service and government ministries, departments and agencies in delivering services to the populace, including core government functions, and the resumption of the sustainable development trajectory. The United Nations system will support the transition of Liberia through political dialogue and the provision of technical advice and by engaging with the Government, political parties, civil society organizations and donors to ensure a seamless political and administrative transfer of power to the incoming President and Government. Through the good offices of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, the United Nations will support national stakeholders to design: (a) a transitional framework for the current Government which defines roles and responsibilities for the transition process; (b) a structured time frame for managing the transition, including timelines for vacating official offices and accommodations; (c) monitoring mechanisms to safeguard government assets through an inventory system; and (d) a handover system covering a broad range of government offices to promote good record keeping and institutional memory.

41. The United Nations leadership in Liberia will engage closely with the incoming President after the elections to support the establishment of a transition team and facilitate engagement with the outgoing President and Government. The aim of this process will be to implement the transition plan and prepare for the inauguration of the new President in January 2018 and prepare the ground for the review of the peacebuilding plan at the end of phase I.

C. Managing the withdrawal of the United Nations Mission in Liberia and the transition to the United Nations country team

42. A United Nations integrated transition plan will be developed before June 2017 to address the required changes in United Nations posture following the departure of UNMIL. The transition plan will: (a) outline specific and detailed

actions by each United Nations entity for each priority area in the peacebuilding plan; (b) describe how the role and approach (e.g., direct advisory services or institutional capacity-building) of each United Nations entity will evolve during the transition process; (c) describe the current and planned field presence in Liberia; and (d) assess the capacity gaps in the country team and provide scenarios for the transfer of UNMIL assets to United Nations agencies, funds and programmes.

43. The integrated transition plan will also assess the capacity of the United Nations in Liberia to continue a high-level good offices function following the departure of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. This element of the transition speaks to one of the key findings of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations, which was that political engagement is necessary in order to sustain peace (see A/70/95-S/2015/446). In Liberia, United Nations integration will need to support substantive coordination of political advocacy and programme delivery to advance the structural reforms in laws and policy required to address the underlying causes of conflict and instability.

44. The United Nations country team capacity-mapping exercise, led by UNDP and the United Nations Laboratory for Organizational Change and Knowledge, began in October 2016 and will continue until April 2017. The outcome of the exercise will be a critical input into the integrated transition plan. The mapping process takes stock of country team capacities in the context of Security Council resolution 2333 (2016) and the overall objective of enabling the country team to fully support peace and development after the departure of UNMIL and helping national stakeholders sustain peace dividends.

45. Initial findings of the capacity-mapping exercise in March 2017 indicate that the departure of UNMIL will result in a reduction in United Nations technical capacity in areas relevant to the implementation of the peacebuilding plan. The loss of the Mission's substantive human rights expertise fully justifies the need for the establishment of a local field office of the United Nations High Commissioner of Human Rights, given the current limited field presence of United Nations agencies, funds and programmes in Liberia. UNMIL has a presence in only three counties,[10] and the field presence of the World Health Organization and the United Nations Population Fund is winding down as Ebola-related projects close. It is widely acknowledged that the presence of the country team in 15 counties will be essential for supporting the Government's decentralization efforts, which are key to sustaining peace, through the continued provision of basic social services (including access to justice) to citizens outside Monrovia.

46. In order to remain relevant and deliver peacebuilding and development assistance to Liberia after UNMIL leaves, the country team will need to design a new business model for development assistance that includes implementation support services to the Government of Liberia, good offices and political support. The country team will need to consider the provision of a joint operations platform to streamline administrative processes and practices in order to strengthen interoperability for more cost-effective delivery of development results. This should include the co-location of agencies, funds and programmes in a United Nations

[10] From 1 July 2017, UNMIL will have a substantive field presence in two counties — Grand Gedeh and Lofa. In addition, there will be a small communications hub in Bong County.

house in Monrovia and joint country team operations, based on the comparative advantages of the respective agencies, to fill the gap that will be created by the withdrawal of UNMIL operational and logistical support, including possible operational and business development partnership solutions for providing (or facilitating the provision of) logistics and transport services in a post-UNMIL environment and the brokering of agreements on the transfer of Mission assets (both material and human resources) to the country team.

47. The transition from a peacekeeping mission to the United Nations country team signifies a shift from predictable assessed funding to the project-based funding of the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes. It is anticipated this will result in a significant drop in development assistance to Liberia, from both multilateral and bilateral donors, which could have a negative impact on the peacebuilding gains in the country, particularly after the electoral period. The Peacebuilding Commission should work with the Security Council to identify a possible mechanism and time frame for sustaining predictable funding for the country team for critical peacebuilding priorities following the departure of UNMIL.

D. Communicating the process of change to the Government and people of Liberia

48. An integrated communications strategy targeting diverse audiences will be further developed by UNMIL and the country team to manage expectations in Liberian society and government circles during the transition period. Transition messages will be delivered to key stakeholders (the Government, citizens, donors and United Nations staff) using various communications outlets, including UNMIL radio broadcasts, community caravans, press conferences, town hall meetings, social media and other innovative communication avenues to ensure the greatest possible outreach. Messaging to partners and the population will focus principally on the continuity of a sustained United Nations presence in Liberia after the withdrawal of UNMIL, while describing the role of the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes and the nature of their collaboration with government entities and civil society.

49. UNMIL radio will play a crucial role in providing trusted and factual information to the Liberian population during the entire transition period, but especially in the run-up to and during the 2017 elections. This service will continue during the transfer of political and administrative power and during the period of the Mission's withdrawal. The United Nations system in Liberia is exploring options for the sustainable transfer of UNMIL radio to an independent entity, which may involve the country team, ECOWAS and other partners.

VII. Framework for supporting long-term peacebuilding priorities

50. Phase II of the plan frames the longer-term goals for peacebuilding in Liberia. It defines the United Nations strategic direction, based on the critical requirements of the immediate post electoral-phase and the requirements for sustaining peace. A joint review of the phase II plan, involving the new Government, the United Nations

system, political parties and civil society organizations in Liberia and international partners, will constitute an integral part of the transition process.

51. The formulation of phase II will coincide with the review and conclusion of the current statement of mutual commitments. Negotiations between the country team and national stakeholders for the development of the new United Nations Development Assistance Framework, which will go into effect in January 2019, will also commence at this time. It is therefore recommended that phase II of the peacebuilding plan form the cornerstone of the new Development Assistance Framework and provide direction for the renewal of other international cooperation frameworks and donor assistance agreements with the Government of Liberia. The opportunity also exists for the peacebuilding plan to become a framework for mutual accountability that defines the shared responsibilities of the Government of Liberia, national stakeholders and the international community for sustaining peace. In principle, phase II may cover the period until 2020, when the midterm review of the Agenda for Transformation II is to take place, thus establishing another critical review juncture for the mandate for sustaining peace of the Government, the United Nations system and international partners.

52. During phase II, the country team will strengthen its unified communication, coordination and convening role by establishing a visible and well-defined presence in the public media, ensuring that Liberians are fully aware of the role the United Nations will play in the ongoing efforts to sustain peace. Full implementation of the recommendations from the country team mapping exercise will be critical to addressing gaps in United Nations system capabilities to support the Government of Liberia following the departure of UNMIL. A major part of this effort will be providing support to the newly elected Government of Liberia in undertaking national planning processes, including advising on harmonization of national plans with the Sustainable Development Goals, Agenda 2063 and other international frameworks, including international human rights treaty obligations, while ensuring effective coordination with international partners. A whole-of-government approach should be adopted with respect to all such efforts, including the executive branch, the Legislature and the judiciary. In this overall planning context, the United Nations system, the Government of Liberia and partners will explore the option of an expanded recovery and peacebuilding assessment, or a hybrid alternative, which would involve the European Union, the United Nations, the World Bank, ECOWAS and the African Union.

53. Preventing conflict will be the main goal of United Nations peace and security activities following the withdrawal of UNMIL. A crucial element of the strategy will be support for the formulation and implementation of a national peace policy and relevant local peace consolidation mechanisms. The United Nations system will need to continue to monitor events in Liberia and make available, upon request, its good offices and technical assistance, including in negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration and judicial settlement, in support of efforts to sustain peace, including, inter alia, through the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel. Work with regional and subregional organizations will support effective early warning and, guided by Security Council resolution 2171 (2014), ensure that early warning of potential conflicts translates into early, concrete preventive action. Within the framework of the Global Focal Point for Police, Justice and Corrections arrangement, the United Nations will provide assistance to priority peacebuilding

areas in the justice and security sectors through advisory and capacity-building support, as outlined in the Justice and Security Joint Programme 2016-2019, including supporting the implementation of the national security strategy.

54. The protection of human rights is critical for sustaining peace, and United Nations support to national institutions and national plans will be critical during this phase of the peacebuilding plan. If the decision is taken to establish an office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Liberia, the United Nations system should agree upon a very specific portfolio of tasks focused on building national capacity and setting out a well-defined exit strategy.

55. The country team will strengthen its collaboration with national stakeholders to support key governance-related peacebuilding areas. One of the most important of these will be the process of constitutional reform, which is required to strengthen national unity, promote human rights and gender equality, ensure participatory and accountable governance and consolidate stability through social and economic justice. This will include engagement with political parties, civil society and relevant government agencies, such as the Governance Commission, the National Elections Commission and the Land Authority, to ensure that peace is consolidated and that reconciliation is advanced beyond the elections. In this regard, civil society will be a critical partner of the United Nations system in strengthening participatory approaches to government decision-making, involving citizens' voices in processes of change and ensuring that all Liberians feel that their concerns are heard by central and local authorities. United Nations agencies, funds and programmes will work with competent government entities to ensure that organizations representing youth and women are fully engaged in strategic peacebuilding processes. This approach will be especially pertinent in advancing the constitutional reform process leading to a referendum and strengthening local government capacities to manage equitable and inclusive service delivery in all 15 counties.

56. During phase II of the peacebuilding plan, the United Nations system will work with national stakeholders to address persistent poverty. This will require long-term support for economic reform, which can furnish local communities with sustainable livelihoods and development opportunities, with particular attention to promoting women's economic empowerment and youth employment. United Nations organizations will support the Government of Liberia in developing and implementing strategies for sustainable, inclusive, private sector-led economic growth aimed at diversifying the economy and building up domestic sources of revenue. Such approaches can defuse the sociopolitical tensions underlying potential conflict. In addition, the United Nation system will support efforts to combat corruption, which continues to be a significant drain on government resources and an impediment to private sector investment.

57. The United Nations system will support the national census in 2018 and participate in the Census Partnership Committee. Since the census will form the basis for the distribution of national resources and political constituencies, the United Nations role will involve ensuring the maintenance of international standards and providing advice to the National Population Census Technical Committee.

58. Through its programmes, the country team will have the specific responsibility of helping the Government of Liberia to build human capabilities within society. It is critical that the United Nations system adopt the practices that will be the most

effective in improving the human development prospects for all Liberians, with particular focus on inclusive economic growth, high quality education, robust health-care systems, infrastructure development, entrepreneurship and community livelihoods for women and youth. At the same time, ongoing work to strengthen the voice and participation of women and youth in decision-making must be intensified. Given the intimate relationship between human activity and the country's ecosystem, the United Nations and its partners must support efforts to strengthen capacities for sustainable natural resource management and climate change adaptation.

VIII. Support for the peacebuilding plan from multilateral and bilateral actors

59. Multilateral and bilateral actors will support the implementation of the peacebuilding plan by aligning their efforts with Liberian priorities and supporting inclusive political processes based on open dialogue. During phase I of the plan this will involve continuing to advocate for critical reforms and provide support in line with pre-existing programmes and commitments. Core peacebuilding values, such as inclusive politics, dialogue and reconciliation, equal participation of women and men, boys and girls, youth and people living with disabilities, and environmental sustainability, will remain at the heart of cooperation agreements between the Government of Liberia and its international partners.

60. Multilateral and bilateral actors will review the efficiency and effectiveness of the financial instruments and arrangements aimed at sustaining peace, which may include leveraging pooled funding and blended financing among the United Nations, bilateral and international donors, multilateral financial institutions and the private sector in order to share risks and maximize the impact of peace and State-building efforts. International partners will ensure transparency, accountability and appropriate monitoring of funds to mitigate corruption, while promoting an inclusive, integrated, strategic and coherent approach to peacebuilding.

61. Multilateral and bilateral actors will generate and sustain international attention on Liberia and advocate with all parties and candidates for the peaceful conduct of elections in 2017 and adherence to the Electoral Law. The African Union has undertaken to provide some technical or logistical support to the election process and to deploy an observer mission. It will be crucial for international actors to engage with the preparations of the country team to sustain peacebuilding needs after the withdrawal of UNMIL, participate in the review of phase I of the peacebuilding plan with the newly elected Government of Liberia, national stakeholders and the United Nations system, and assist with the formulation of specific commitments for phase II of the plan. Multilateral and bilateral actors will participate fully in the Government's management arrangements for the peacebuilding plan and be a part of the process to monitor progress in delivering results.

62. It is anticipated that ECOWAS will be a key partner for peace and security in Liberia following the withdrawal of UNMIL. It is the premier subregional body in West Africa and has a statutory mandate to promote peace and security and a wide-ranging human security and human development agenda. Accordingly, ECOWAS

partnerships with the Government of Liberia, the country team and international actors will be significant. ECOWAS is a natural ally of the sustaining peace agenda and possesses a response capacity to deter and prevent violent conflict.

63. In collaboration with the Government of Liberia, the United Nations system and international partners, ECOWAS will support the peacebuilding plan through the following actions:

(a) Deploying the ECOWAS Warning and Response Network in Liberia through the setting up of the National Centre for the Coordination of the Response Mechanism in Monrovia during phase I of the plan;

(b) Establishing a short- and long-term elections observation mission to monitor the 2017 electoral process and deploying a fact-finding team to Liberia to help with policy and strategic advice to contribute to the conduct of an inclusive and peaceful election;

(c) Providing a capacity-building programme for women and media representatives during the election period;

(d) Engaging Liberian civil society organizations on the essential elements of the ECOWAS regional conflict prevention framework;

(e) Working with the Government of Liberia (the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Peacebuilding Office and the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection) on domesticating international instruments on gender-based violence and the promotion of the education and empowerment of women and girls;

(f) Supporting the United Nations system in ensuring the sustainable transfer of UNMIL radio to an independent entity.

64. The World Bank Group will support the peacebuilding plan through the following actions:

(a) Supporting the Government of Liberia in attaining more efficient and effective use of resources, including through a public expenditure review of the security sector;

(b) Completing and sharing with the Government of Liberia and international partners a joint risk and resilience assessment by May 2017;

(c) Giving priority to conflict-sensitive and conflict-mitigating activities, such as labour-intensive public works, youth skills development and empowerment and community-driven development, in ongoing development programmes, as appropriate;

(d) Exploring the option of a tripartite (European Union, United Nations and World Bank) or expanded peacebuilding assessment (recovery and peacebuilding assessment or a hybrid alternative) as part of the planning process for phase II;

(e) Supporting the Government of Liberia in developing and implementing its public financial management strategy so as to consolidate the gains made in revenue mobilization, resource allocation, expenditure management and accountability;

(f) Fostering shared growth through a conducive business climate, improved connectivity, enhanced power supply and access to quality public services.

IX. Management arrangements

65. The peacebuilding plan will be monitored jointly by the Government of Liberia the United Nations system, the Peacebuilding Commission, bilateral and multilateral actors, regional organizations and representatives of Liberian civil society.

66. During phase I, the Agenda for Transformation sector working groups will meet once every two months to monitor implementation of the peacebuilding plan. The results of the deliberations of the sector working groups will be fed into meetings of the Liberia Development Alliance through the approved pillar structure. The Alliance, which is chaired by the President, will act as the higher-level policy oversight body for the implementation of the peacebuilding plan. The Alliance will meet twice a year to review the peacebuilding plan, and the Government of Liberia will provide the secretariat and preparatory support for those meetings. The purpose of the formal meetings will be to review progress in achieving the objectives and commitments of the peacebuilding plan and to focus the attention of the international community on key peacebuilding issues requiring additional action. Specific sectoral issues will be discussed by the sector working groups. On issues related to the transition of UNMIL, discussions should include specific engagement with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, as required to advance implementation.

67. Before the departure of UNMIL, the new Government of Liberia, the United Nations system, the Peacebuilding Commission, bilateral and multilateral actors, regional organizations and representatives of Liberian civil society will initiate the review of progress made during phase I of the plan. The review will lead to an agreement of priority activities and financing required for phase II and reaffirm the management arrangements for monitoring the plan's implementation. The process will encompass the final review of the statement of mutual commitments and will explore options for underwriting phase II of the peacebuilding plan with a framework for mutual accountability. During phase II of the plan, it is expected that regular progress meetings will continue to be held and include the Peacebuilding Commission.

68. The instrument for monitoring results will use indicators for measuring progress towards restoring social cohesion and advancing reconciliation, as two critical elements of conflict transformation and sustaining peace. It will be based on existing qualitative and quantitative methodologies used in Liberia for assessing risk and provide diagnostic and predictive qualities that will allow the Government and stakeholders to identify optimal entry points for peacebuilding policies and programmes. As a barometer of progress, the instrument will monitor critical peacebuilding benchmarks over the course of the implementation of the peacebuilding plan. Social cohesion will be measured by monitoring perceived corruption, trust in institutions, human security and life satisfaction. Progress in reconciliation will be assessed by monitoring indicators for negative stereotypes, intergroup anxiety, social distance, social threats and active discrimination.

Annex I

Peacebuilding priorities of the Government of Liberia in phase I

The Government of Liberia commits to work with all national and international stakeholders to deliver the following results before January 2018:

Promoting inclusive and peaceful elections in 2017

- Ensure free, fair, transparent and safe conduct of the 2017 presidential and legislative elections in accordance with the new Electoral Law
- Conclude a compact among political parties for inclusive peaceful elections, post-election processes and political transition
- Provide agreed budgetary appropriations and timely allotment for the 2017 electoral process in line with operational requirements
- Encourage political parties to increase women's participation in elected institutions based upon the new Electoral Law
- Ensure that the justice and security agencies are prepared and resourced with adequate and timely budgetary appropriations and improve agencies' community-level coordination

Peace, security and rule of law

- Provide timely budgetary appropriations to the Ministry of Justice and the judiciary, within the limit of the available resources, to deliver effective prosecutorial, public defence and adjudication services for election-related crimes and disputes
- Strengthen community engagement in the security sector through well-coordinated civil society partnerships and community policing mechanisms
- Reinforce the role of the county and related district security councils and the county-level early warning and early response network, and connect these mechanisms to the Liberia National Early Warning and Response Mechanism Coordinating Centre
- Operationalize the Policy and Civilian Complaints Review Boards and initiate implementation of the national security strategy, the Firearms and Ammunition Control Act, the Police Act and the Immigration Services Act
- Continue the implementation of nationally validated recommendations addressing systemic weaknesses in the criminal justice sector
- Revise the Strategic Road Map for National Healing, Peacebuilding and Reconciliation (2013-2030) and produce volume I of the project on national history symbols to foster national unity
- Undertake seven county reconciliation dialogues and convene a national conference on reconciliation

Governance and public institutions

- Manage the political and administrative transition and ensure the protection of public assets
- Pass the Local Government Bill by September 2017
- Pass the Land Rights Bill by September 2017 and ensure that the Land Authority is operational through budgetary appropriations
- Create the Ministry of Local Government and Peacebuilding by June 2017, which will replace the Ministry of Internal Affairs
- Complete the establishment of the county service centres in all 15 counties and provide appropriate resources in the 2017/18 fiscal budget for their operations and recurrent costs
- Implement the Government of Liberia-civil society organizations policy framework and accord, with particular focus on holding a national summit involving the Government and the National Civil Society Council of Liberia
- Develop and present to the Legislature a Witness Protection and Whistle Blower Bill by July 2017

Economic reform and development

- Formulate a national planning framework to succeed the Agenda for Transformation aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063
- Establish a research and policy unit in the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning to improve macroeconomic policy management functions, including economic modelling and policy advisory services to enhance fiscal prudence, revenue and services
- Strengthen the existing aid information management system to strengthen capacities for aid coordination and management

Cross-cutting issues

- Implement the National Human Rights Action Plan and promote protection of human rights across all spheres of government; request the establishment of an office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Liberia
- Pass the National Youth Bill by September 2017
- Accelerate the implementation of projects and programmes designed to constructively engage young people in the 2017 electoral process, including the youth opportunity project and the technical and vocational training programme
- Ensure the meaningful participation of women throughout all phases of the 2017 electoral process, as candidates, voters and election administrators

- Apply gender-responsive budgeting in the preparation of the 2017/18 budgets of ministries, agencies and commissions, paying particular attention to marginalized girls and women
- Expand the women's peace huts initiative to enhance inclusive community dialogue, mediation and conflict resolution
- Complete the review of the national action plan for implementing Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and initiate the implementation of the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Note: In order to facilitate the Government's commitment to implementing actions under phase I of the peacebuilding plan, the Peacebuilding Office will work with the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning and other line ministries, agencies and commissions to detail the financial implications in preparation for the 2017/18 fiscal budget period.

Annex II

Peacebuilding priorities of the Government of Liberia in phase II

It is envisaged that the new Government of Liberia will work with national and international stakeholders to mobilize political and financial support to advance peacebuilding in the following areas:

Peace, security and rule of law

- Implement legislative and policy reforms relating to public safety and the private security sector
- Modernize the legislative and policy framework of the justice and security sector with targeted reforms and the effective implementation of new laws and policies
- Strengthen the coordination between the three branches of Government and between justice and security institutions, as well as with integrity institutions, with the objective of ensuring policy coherence at the operational level and improving oversight and accountability
- Undertake essential recruitment and training to further decentralize the presence of competent justice and security sector personnel across the country, with recruitment focusing on fulfilling established targets for women's employment in the sector
- Implement recommendations of the public expenditure review, with the objective of ensuring appropriate resourcing and effective financial management of the justice and security sector
- Draft and enact a national peace policy
- Provide adequate and timely budgetary support to ensure the effective operations of key conflict prevention and peacebuilding institutions
- Provide adequate and timely financial support to strengthen cross-border peace initiatives, including the Mano River Union cross-border strategy, involving local chiefs, traditional elders and communities on both sides of the borders between Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Sierra Leone
- Strengthen the role of traditional mechanisms for peace and conflict prevention, including the Palava Hut system, in the peacebuilding process

Governance and public institutions

- Conclude the constitutional reform process and hold a referendum on the Liberian Constitution by the end of December 2019
- Accelerate the process of decentralization and ensure the full implementation of the Local Government Act
- Strengthen national integrity institutions and judicial mechanisms to combat the culture and practices of corruption and impunity

- Accelerate the process of land reform to ensure the implementation of an equitable and robust land governance and administration system
- Amend the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission Act of 2008, granting full prosecutorial power to anti-corruption courts

Economic reform and development

- Implement a comprehensive national development framework, ensuring that the requisite political and financial assets exist to domesticate the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063
- Review and implement a domestic resource mobilization strategy and expand the fiscal space, with an emphasis on diversifying the Liberian economy, fostering private sector growth and leveraging the investment potential of Liberians in the diaspora

Cross-cutting issues

- Accelerate the domestication of outstanding international human rights instruments into national law and take concrete protective measures to ensure the full enjoyment of rights by all
- Address transitional justice issues in Liberia in line with the recommendations in the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission
- Establish mechanisms for the implementation and independent monitoring of recommendations contained in universal periodic review reports
- Ensure that the Independent National Commission on Human Rights is able to fully implement its mandate across the country
- Develop and implement a coordinated and well-funded national youth employment programme that is able to provide decent work to all categories of young people, including university graduates and apprenticeship trainees
- Introduce civic education and citizenship studies in the curriculum at the primary and secondary school levels and support extracurricular, in-the-community efforts to employ dialogue as a means of solving problems
- Create a nationwide network of sociopsychological counselling services that target vulnerable youth and help them with their moral, ethical, intellectual and mental health development
- Enshrine gender affirmative action as a part of the process for constitutional reform
- Ensure that all national policy and planning processes are gender responsive
- Ensure effective and transparent conflict- and climate-sensitive management of natural resources
- Integrate indigenous and effective coping strategies into national development policy and planning, ensuring that social and conflict perspectives are part of climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies and interventions

Annex III

Statement of registered political parties in Liberia in support of the peacebuilding plan for Liberia, adopted at the headquarters of the United Nations Mission in Liberia in Monrovia on 17 March 2017

Whereas political parties in Liberia participated in the consultations initiated by the United Nations system in Liberia to develop a peacebuilding plan pursuant to Security Council resolution 2333 (2016),

Whereas the parties embraced the guiding principle of inclusive national ownership of the peacebuilding plan,

Whereas the parties accepted that the priorities outlined in the peacebuilding plan are critical for sustaining peace in Liberia, and that peace consolidation remains a national responsibility of all branches of government and the broader society,

Now, thereof, the political parties resolve to support the peacebuilding plan for Liberia and to work with the Government of Liberia, the United Nations system, regional organizations, bilateral and multilateral partners and civil society to actively pursue the national peacebuilding priorities outlined in annexes I and II of the peacebuilding plan.

Annex IV

Statement of the National Civil Society Council of Liberia, 18 March 2017

Whereas the National Civil Society Council of Liberia is the apex body of civil society in Liberia which is elected by a cross section of peers from civil society organizations throughout the country,

Whereas the National Civil Society Council of Liberia looks forward to fully participating at all levels in the implementation of the peacebuilding plan,

Whereas civil society organizations need to monitor the election process, serve as civic voter educators and hold political parties accountable for the implementation of the memorandum of understanding between political parties and the National Elections Commission, and pursue advocacy activities to this end in support of our democracy,

Whereas civil society organizations are instrumental to consolidating peace, by providing expertise and experience for the whole process of national reconciliation to avoid returning to our violent past,

Whereas civil society organizations need to be involved in the process of enacting key legislation of the Government required for addressing the root causes of conflict, including the pending legislation on land rights, local governance, anti-corruption, gender equity and domestic violence,

Whereas community-based organizations should be fully involved in decentralization efforts and be partners in setting up and operating the county service centres,

Whereas, civil society will be part of the mechanism to monitor the implementation of the peacebuilding plan, as reflected in the management arrangements,

Now, thereof, the National Civil Society Council of Liberia and its members resolve to support the peacebuilding plan and will continue to work assiduously towards consolidating peace, and reaffirm their commitment to hold the Government of Liberia accountable in the process of transition and the implementation of the peacebuilding plan.

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Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Support Mission in Libya

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 2323 (2016) of 13 December 2016. It covers political and security developments in Libya, provides an overview of the human rights and humanitarian situation in the country and outlines the activities of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) since the issuance of my previous report of 1 December 2016 (S/2016/1011).

II. Political and security-related developments

2. Over a year after the signing of the Libyan Political Agreement, and following months of political stalemate, efforts continue to facilitate its effective implementation. The Presidency Council has worked to consolidate its authority despite internal divisions and a challenging security context. Positive steps were taken, including the establishment of a budget framework for 2017 as part of efforts to operationalize funding streams to deliver services and ensure the functioning of public institutions. However, on 2 January 2017, Deputy Prime Minister Mousa al-Kony resigned, expressing discontent at the ineffectiveness of the Presidency Council.

3. The overall security situation deteriorated significantly during the reporting period, with escalating clashes in Tripoli, fighting in the oil crescent region and rising tensions in the Sabha area. Ongoing mediation efforts by the United Nations, in close cooperation with regional and international partners, are keeping the parties engaged and largely supportive of the political process, within the framework of the Libyan Political Agreement. Consensus is slowly emerging on the issues that need to be addressed to restore the political transition. Potential for further military escalation remains, however, due to the largely unaddressed structural political issues and the multiplicity of armed actors on the ground with conflicting agendas.

Implementation of the Libyan Political Agreement

4. UNSMIL continued to work with Libyan stakeholders to identify specific options for reviving the political process and launching talks on the contentious issues that are hampering the implementation of the Libyan Political Agreement. Parties across Libya expressed their continued commitment to the Agreement as the

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framework for the country's transition. However, there is broad consensus that certain defined elements of the Agreement must be amended to enable its implementation.

5. To move the process forward, and to identify the challenges to implementing the Libyan Political Agreement, a group of 40 Libyan representatives, comprising members of Parliament and the High State Council, former members of the Libyan National Transitional Council, former regime officials and tribal leaders, met in Cairo on 12 December 2016. In the concluding statement at that meeting, participants called for changes to the membership of the Libyan political dialogue, amendments to article 8 of the Additional Provisions of the Political Agreement and resolution of the issue of the command and structure of the Libyan armed forces. They also called for restructuring of the Presidency Council and amendment of its decision-making mechanisms, and for the enlargement of the High State Council to include all former members of the General National Congress.

6. On 5 January 2017, in an effort to explore options for a consensual amendment of the Libyan Political Agreement, my Special Representative met with the President of the House of Representatives, Agila Saleh, in Tunis. The President of the House of Representatives proposed a reconfiguration of the Libyan political dialogue on the basis of representation from the House of Representatives and the High State Council. My Special Representative also met with the President of the High State Council, Abderrahman Swehli, who expressed willingness to engage. My Special Representative met again with the President of the House of Representatives and the President of the High State Council on 19 and 20 February, respectively. They both agreed in principle to form a joint committee, including members of the House of Representatives and the High State Council, to work together to amend the agreement by consensus.

7. The Libyan political dialogue continued to play an important role as a consultative body bringing together representatives of diverse stakeholders and views. On 24 January 2017, an informal consultative session of members of the dialogue proposed options for resolving the key contentious issues hampering the implementation of the Libyan Political Agreement, including the composition and role of the Presidency Council and the supreme command of the Libyan National Army. The majority of the members of the Libyan political dialogue attended and endorsed the conclusions of the consultative session.

8. The House of Representatives remained divided, failing to reach the quorum necessary to vote on the proposed amendment to the Constitutional Declaration, by means of which institutions emanating from the Libyan Political Agreement would be incorporated into the constitutional framework and the provisions of the Constitutional Declaration would be amended. The House of Representatives was also unable to agree on the composition of the delegation that would be mandated to represent it in talks with other stakeholders.

9. Parallel institutions remained in place. The Bayda'-based "interim Government" continued to assert its authority in the east of the country, despite its lack of legal status under the Libyan Political Agreement. Similarly, the former, unrecognized, "Government of National Salvation" continued with its efforts to reassert control in various parts of Tripoli and symbolically seized a number of unoccupied government buildings.

Regional and international engagement

10. Neighbouring States and regional organizations continued to exert efforts to support the advancement of the Libyan political process. On 21 January 2017, the tenth ministerial meeting of the neighbouring countries of Libya was held in Cairo.

Participants reiterated their commitment to preserving the legitimacy and unity of Libyan State institutions, including the Libyan National Army, and expressed support for the Presidency Council, calling for the formation of a government of national accord. They also undertook to foster regional cooperation in the area of counter-terrorism and border security, and to continue to coordinate their initiatives in the context of the United Nations-facilitated political process.

11. On 21 January 2017, to improve coordination among regional organizations, my Special Representative participated in the second formal meeting of the "troika" comprising the African Union, the League of Arab States and the United Nations, which was held in Cairo, and hosted by the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States. The three institutions agreed to continue to coordinate closely and to extend membership of the group to the European Union.

12. The African Union High-level Committee on Libya met for the second time on 27 January 2017, in Brazzaville. Participating Heads of State expressed support for the institutions emanating from the Libyan Political Agreement. In its final communiqué, the Committee also called for an inclusive political process to overcome existing blockages and extended its membership to include all of the neighbouring States of Libya.

13. On 19 and 20 January 2017, to foster greater cooperation and coordination of regional initiatives, Tunisia convened a ministerial-level meeting between Algeria, Egypt and Tunisia, Libya's northern neighbours, in Tunis. At the meeting the ministers reiterated their support for an inclusive political process facilitated by the United Nations, based on respect for the sovereignty and unity of Libya.

Situation in the western region

14. The security situation in Tripoli remained volatile. The capital continued to be under the control of multiple armed groups, some of them aligned with the Presidency Council and others opposed to it. Several of these groups sought to expand their influence, provoking increased clashes in contested areas throughout Tripoli and in its environs.

15. In early December 2016, armed groups clashed in downtown Tripoli with militants loyal to the former Government of National Salvation, leaving 20 people dead and many more injured, including civilians. To the west of the capital, armed groups from Janzur and the neighbouring Warshafanah area clashed in early February 2017. At least four people died. In the east of Tripoli, eight people were killed in clashes between groups from the towns of Qasr al-Qarahbulli and Tarhunah. On 21 January, an aborted car bombing near the Italian embassy in Tripoli resulted in the death of two of the perpetrators. Furthermore, ordinary crime and lawlessness spread, with kidnappings and robberies severely affecting citizens' freedom of movement. Further clashes took place in southern Tripoli in mid- and late February between groups from the Abu Salim area and Misratah, leaving at least 17 people dead.

16. The former Government of National Salvation, together with remnants of the former General National Congress, continued efforts to re-establish their power base in Tripoli. On 12 January 2017, armed groups loyal to them took over a number of ministerial facilities in southern Tripoli, including the Ministry of Defence. On 15 February, armed groups opposed to the Presidency Council and military officers from various cities in western Libya, including Misratah, Zawiyah, Gharyan and Tripoli, announced the formation of a national guard and held military parades throughout the area. Moreover, on 21 February, the convoy of President Faiez Serraj was ambushed by forces loyal to the General National Congress in the vicinity of its former headquarters, resulting in a firefight.

Situation in the eastern region

17. Previously, the Libyan National Army had replaced the elected mayors in a number of eastern municipalities with military officers. On 16 February 2017, the Libyan National Army issued a decision prohibiting women under 60 years of age from travelling abroad without a male "guardian", citing security concerns. Throughout the country, Libyan women activists protested and described the decision as a breach of the country's human rights obligations, as well as of the Constitutional Declaration. The decision was put on hold on 21 February as a result of those protests and was subsequently replaced by a decision requiring all Libyans between 18 and 45 years of age to acquire security approval before travelling abroad.

18. Fighting continued in various locations in the eastern region, in particular in the city of Benghazi. In early January 2017, a large group of fighters of Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) broke out of their enclaves in the Qanfudah and Sabri areas and escaped towards the south. Many were subsequently killed by the Libyan National Army in the Ajdabiya area. In late January, the Libyan National Army gained control over most of the Qanfudah area, formerly held by the Benghazi Revolutionaries Shura Council and its allies. More than 30 the Libyan National Army troops were reportedly killed and 25 were reported wounded in the clashes, including in repeated airstrikes by the Libyan National Army on positions of the Benghazi Revolutionaries Shura Council. More than 60 captives were reportedly freed from Qanfudah, as well as 30 families and 46 foreign workers. Subsequent fighting centred on the last stronghold of the Benghazi Revolutionaries Shura Council in the area, where a number of civilians were still present. UNSMIL continued to support local mediators in their efforts to facilitate the evacuation of civilians from the district of Qanfudah. Fighting continued in the central Sabri and Suq al-Hut neighbourhoods.

19. In central Benghazi, one person was killed and five others injured on 20 January 2017 when a car bomb exploded, injuring a former interior minister. On 25 January, a car bomb rocked the centre of Benghazi, leaving at least six people wounded, including five civilians and a soldier. On 22 February, a car bomb targeted the head of police in Benghazi, causing injuries; and on 25 February, a similar attack targeted a senior commander of the Libyan National Army, resulting in three reported fatalities and several wounded.

Situation in the southern region

20. In Sabha, the situation remained fragile, characterized by a continued build-up of rival military forces, including the Misratan Third Force, Battalion 12 of the Libyan National Army and armed groups affiliated with the Awlad Sulayman, Qadhadhfa and Tebu tribes, which are competing for the control of strategic infrastructure amid ongoing tribal tensions. On 24 December 2016, clashes between the Awlad Sulayman and Qadhadhfa tribes reportedly caused 10 fatalities, notwithstanding a peace deal signed earlier between the two communities. In Kufrah, on 1 February 2017, tensions rose in the border area with the Sudan, following a clash between armed groups of the Tebu and Zwaya tribes that left five people dead and three injured. On 5 February, relations between the Hasawnah and Zintan communities became strained after a shooting incident that resulted in three fatalities.

21. On 23 December 2016, two Libyan individuals hijacked a Libyan passenger aircraft at Sabha's Tamanhint airport, forcing the pilot to divert to Malta. The incident resulted in the closure of the airport, hitherto used for civilian flights to the area. During the reporting period, frequent skirmishes occurred in the surroundings

of Birak al-Shati' airbase and Tamanhint airport between Libyan National Army Battalion 12 forces of the Maqarihah tribe and the rival Misratan Third Force, which controls the two airbases

22. In protest at the lack of security and basic services in the southern region, on 15 January 2017, members of the House of Representatives from the area issued a statement suspending their membership. On 20 February, they resumed their membership.

ISIL and the liberation of Sirte

23. After a seven-month Libyan-led counter-terrorism campaign, forces allied to the Presidency Council, participating in Operation Bunyan Marsus (Solid Wall), took control of the last ISIL stronghold in Sirte on 6 December 2016. By liberating Sirte, the Operation forces, supported by United States airstrikes, ended ISIL control and administration of the territory, which it had established in 2014. The forces sustained at least 715 fatalities during the campaign, with more than 4,000 troops injured. The number of ISIL losses was estimated at around 2,500 fighters.

24. Remnants of ISIL were still active in the hinterland of Sirte. ISIL elements continued to conduct asymmetric attacks against Operation Bunyan Marsus forces, mainly with improvised explosive devices and ambushes along the roads west of Sirte and in desert valleys to the south-west of the city, where they found safe havens. There were more than 25 attacks from September 2016 to January 2017. On 19 January 2017, a United States airstrike killed an estimated 90 ISIL fighters in the desert south-west of Sirte. Most ISIL fighters who had left Sirte during the months of fighting withdrew to the desert and mountainous areas south of Bani Walid, where they maintain a presence. Some smaller cells also moved southward to the area of Sabha and Awbari or westward towards the areas of Khums and Tarhunah. Moreover, it is reported that there are still ISIL sleeper cells in the western coastal areas and the greater Tripoli area.

25. Operation Bunyan Marsus forces, largely composed of fighters from Misratah, remained deployed in Sirte and the Jufrah region in central Libya. Other battalions returned to their home towns, including Misratah, or to Tripoli, reinforcing the armed groups already present south of the capital. Local authorities began some rehabilitation work in Sirte as internally displaced people started to return to parts of the city. Other neighbourhoods of the city remained contaminated by improvised explosive devices and explosive remnants of war. A post-conflict stabilization plan for Sirte was developed under the supervision of the Presidency Council but remains in need of resources. On 11 February 2017, the Mayor of Sirte was abducted by unknown perpetrators in the vicinity of Tripoli. He is yet to be accounted for.

26. Between 3 and 13 March 2017, the Benghazi Defence Brigades, a coalition of Islamist armed groups, temporarily seized control of the Sidrah and Ra's Lanuf oil ports and nearby towns in the oil crescent area from the Libyan National Army, following unsuccessful previous attacks. On 14 March, after heavy airstrikes, Libyan National Army forces retook control of the area from the Benghazi Defence Brigades and pushed the group back towards Jufrah. More than 40 people, including some civilians, were reportedly killed in the fighting. The Libyan National Army carried out a series of airstrikes on Benghazi Defence Brigades forces in the Jufrah area between December 2016 and March 2017.

Economic situation

27. On 6 January 2017, as part of efforts to activate the budget and address the most pressing economic challenges, the Prime Minister, Faiez Serraj, signed the 2017 budget framework, following a series of Libyan economic dialogue meetings

that brought representatives of the Presidency Council and the country's main economic and financial institutions, together with a limited number of Member States. The Presidency Council continued to exert efforts to operationalize funding streams for line ministries from the Central Bank. During the reporting period, the Presidency Council and the Central Bank completed the disbursement of the remaining 2016 expenditures and agreed on the budgetary process.

28. The Central Bank introduced a number of measures to tackle the liquidity crisis, including the circulation of newly printed banknotes and the allocation of $400 per year for purchase by each Libyan citizen at the official exchange rate. Meanwhile, the Presidency Council and the Central Bank are in disagreement over how to address the devaluation of the dinar. As of 7 March 2017, the black market exchange rate was 6.36 dinars per United States dollar, compared with an official exchange rate of 1.42 dinars per United States dollar.

29. The improvement of economic indicators such as the growth of the gross domestic product (GDP) and government revenues since August 2016 can be attributed to a significant increase in oil production. In mid-January 2017, Libyan oil output exceeded 720,000 barrels per day, compared with 200,000 barrels per day in August 2016. With the aim of increasing oil production to over 1.2 million barrels per day by the end of 2017, the chairman of the National Oil Corporation, Mustafa Sanalla, continued to engage with a number of international oil corporations to explore options for attracting foreign direct investment into the oil sector.

III. Constitution drafting process

30. International efforts to support the process of drafting the constitution continued. During the reporting period, the administrative court in Bayda' ruled against the changes to the by-laws of the Constitution Drafting Assembly, which had allowed a vote to be taken on the draft constitution with a reduced quorum. On the basis of that vote, 37 of the 58 elected members of the Assembly had agreed on a draft to be put to a referendum. The decision of the administrative court is being appealed before the Supreme Court in Tripoli. A new member was appointed to replace the former chairman of the Constitution Drafting Assembly, Ali Tarhouni, who was ruled ineligible to serve by another decision of the administrative court. A new chairman, Nuh Abdel Sayed Al-Maghrabi, was elected on 3 January 2017.

31. The inability to make progress towards final agreement on the text of the constitution to be put to a referendum is linked to the stalemate in the political process. Frustration with continued political divisions has also affected the Assembly. On 24 January 2017, members of the Libyan political dialogue issued a statement calling for the suspension of the Assembly within a month, should that body fail to commit to the completion of a draft constitution. Members of the dialogue cited article 52 of the Libyan Political Agreement, according to which the work of the Assembly was to continue no longer than 24 March 2016. Members of the Assembly condemned the statement and cautioned against the replacement of a democratically elected body.

IV. Other activities of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya

A. Electoral support

32. The United Nations electoral support team maintained its readiness to provide advisory support and technical assistance to the High National Elections

Commission. Following the closure of its Libyan Electoral Assistance Project in December 2016, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) commissioned an evaluation to provide recommendations regarding its future involvement within a reviewed and integrated United Nations electoral assistance framework for continuous support to the High National Elections Commission and Libyan electoral stakeholders, in support of credible electoral processes.

33. The headquarters of the High National Elections Commission and its 17 district electoral offices remained operational across the country during the reporting period, although a lack of funding may have a negative impact on the Commission's capacity in the long term. Furthermore, a lack of clarity on the political and electoral framework, and the volatile security situation in Libya, will continue to pose major challenges for the conduct of any electoral events, including the upcoming presidential and parliamentary elections tentatively scheduled for early 2018.

B. Human rights, transitional justice and the rule of law

34. Violations of international human rights and humanitarian law continued to be perpetrated by all parties to the conflict. In addition, ordinary crime was endemic, mainly owing to the state of general lawlessness and the weakness of judicial institutions.

35. The ongoing conflict across the country continued to claim civilian casualties. From 1 December 2016 to 17 February 2017, UNSMIL documented a total of 48 civilian casualties, including 24 deaths and 24 injuries. Leading causes of death included direct gunfire, airstrikes, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices. Two explosions from improvised explosive devices targeted the Benghazi Medical Centre on 1 and 21 December, causing five injuries, as well as material damage.

36. On 27 January 2017, residents of Qanfudah, including families, migrants and prisoners from the former Abu Hudaymah military prison, were taken into the custody of the Libyan National Army in a number of detention facilities. In some cases, civilians were denied family visits and did not receive legal assistance. Dozens of others remain trapped in a small area of Qanfudah where they are still facing severe shortages of food and water and a lack of medical care. UNSMIL continued to investigate allegations of extrajudicial executions following the takeover of Qanfudah by the Libyan National Army.

Abductions and killings

37. Armed groups from all sides continued to abduct, torture and kill civilians. Individuals were targeted for their political opinions, affiliations, family or tribal identity, and also for ransom or prisoner exchange. On 19 December 2016, in Darnah, four men affiliated to the Darnah Mujahidin Shura Council abducted an individual from the street and detained him for six days and severely beat him. On 10 February 2017, armed men reportedly affiliated with the Libyan National Army raided the home of a former military commander in Ajdabiya and abducted his son, holding him at an unofficial detention facility in Benghazi for two days before they released him.

38. On 8 December 2016, the bodies of two men with gunshot wounds were found near the Barakah Correction and Rehabilitation Institution (known as Ruwaymi prison) in Tripoli. The men had reportedly been detained at the facility prior to their deaths. According to the head of the judicial police, the case has been referred to the Office of the General Prosecutor after an internal investigation. No investigations

were reported to have taken place into previous reports of extrajudicial executions by armed groups, including the alleged shooting upon capture of eight members of the Petroleum National Guard in Sidrah by an armed group aligned with the Libyan National Army, on 18 September 2016.

39. During the reporting period, UNSMIL continued to receive information on kidnappings in Bayda', Darnah and Shahhat. On 1 February 2017, in Bayda', an armed group abducted the Director of the Darnah Civil Registration Office. On the same day, in Darnah, two elders were taken by the Darnah Mujahidin Shura Council and subsequently released. On 3 February, a former member of the General National Congress and a lecturer at Omar al-Mukhtar University were abducted from the street in Shahhat. Their whereabouts and the reason behind their abduction remain unclear. House of Representatives member Jibril Awhaidah from Kufrah was also kidnapped outside his home in Tubruq on 31 January. He was subsequently released unharmed on 18 February.

Detention, torture and deaths in custody

40. Arbitrary detention continued to be widespread in both official prisons and detention facilities run by armed groups across the country. Little progress was made in reviewing individual cases to ensure that those being held are either referred to trial or released, in accordance with Libyan law.

41. UNSMIL visited a number of facilities, including the Barakah, Tubruq, Jawwiyah and Taminah prisons under the purview of the Ministry of Justice. UNSMIL registered concerns relating to overcrowded and unhygienic conditions, and severe delays in referring detainees to the judicial authorities. Previous allegations of torture, ill-treatment and deaths in custody as a result of torture were not reported to have resulted in prosecutions.

Groups in vulnerable situations

Migrants

42. Migrants were rounded up and detained arbitrarily in detention centres run by the Libyan Department for Combating Illegal Migration or under the control of armed groups and criminal trafficking networks. Migrants were not afforded the opportunity to challenge the legality of their detention and were held with insufficient food, clean water and access to sanitation facilities, leading to serious illness and sometimes death. On 13 December 2016, UNSMIL and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), issued a joint report on human rights abuses against migrants in Libya. It was reported that migrants are subjected to torture, forced labour and sexual exploitation at the hands of smugglers, traffickers, members of armed groups and security forces, including the Libyan coastguard.

Women and children

43. Children were victims of abductions, arbitrary detention, torture and other ill-treatment, and were often held in detention together with adults. Civilian casualties included children, with at least five killed and four injured in hostilities during the reporting period.

44. Women were arbitrarily held in detention, often because of family affiliations. Women and girls, including foreign nationals, were held captive in Sirte by groups allied to ISIL. They were subjected to torture, rape and other forms of sexual violence. By the end of February 2017, at least 117 women were being held in overcrowded prisons in Misratah under investigation for alleged involvement in

terrorism-related activities. The majority had reportedly been cleared by the prosecution in January.

45. At a workshop on human rights monitoring, including of sexual and gender-based violence, facilitated by UNSMIL on 5 December 2016, participants highlighted the rise in sexual violence against women and lamented the general climate of insecurity and the breakdown of the rule of law.

Transitional justice and national reconciliation

46. UNSMIL and UNDP continued to support the Misratah/Tawurgha' dialogue committee. However, the agreement on reparations and the return of displaced persons that was finalized by the committee on 31 August 2016 has not yet been signed by the Misratah Municipal Council or the Presidency Council. In December 2016 and January 2017, UNSMIL facilitated a number of meetings of the committee on reparations and the right of return for internally displaced persons to discuss the modalities for a non-technical assessment of the levels of contamination by landmines and other explosive remnants of war in Tawurgha'.

47. On 21 February 2017, UNSMIL and OHCHR issued a joint report on the trial of Saif al-Islam Qadhafi and 36 other leading members of the regime of Colonel Muammar Qadhafi (Case 630/2012). The report found that while the trial represented the most extensive effort by the Libyan authorities to hold to account those responsible for human rights violations and war crimes during the 2011 uprising and armed conflict, it fell short of international standards for a fair trial.

48. A national reconciliation process remains long overdue in Libya. Nonetheless, women and youth, along with tribal councils, elders, civil society organizations and municipalities, were engaged in reconciliation at the local and community levels. Recent coordinated bottom-up efforts by those actors had helped to settle local conflicts, including in Sabha and in Tripoli.

49. During the reporting period, UNSMIL continued its work on fostering reconciliation, including through a programme to assist and strengthen community reconciliation processes, with the support of the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund and UNDP. From 19 to 21 January 2017, UNSMIL held a workshop in Malta, with Libyan experts and activists representing a wide variety of constituencies, to establish a clear road map for national reconciliation in Libya.

Judicial and penal system

50. Prosecutors, judges and other judicial staff continued to work in a difficult security environment, in which they were subjected to intimidation and threats. On 1 February 2017, a group of armed men broke into the Zawiyah court complex in an apparent attempt to abduct a public prosecutor. In protest at the failure of the authorities to secure the court premises and provide protection for judicial staff, a number of prosecutors suspended their work. The Tripoli court complex suspended its activities for several days in late December 2016, following the storming of its premises by armed men on 26 December and the killing of two members of the Criminal Investigation Department.

51. UNSMIL continued to support the building of national judicial institutions. On 7 and 8 December 2016, UNSMIL facilitated a seminar attended by senior judicial police officers, prosecutors, judges and civil society representatives to strengthen cooperation between the prison administration and the judiciary.

52. During the reporting period, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) initiated a legislative review process in the context of its project entitled "Support to the process of criminal justice reform in Libya". The first phase of the

review focused on the Criminal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedure and the Police Act.

53. In addition, in January and February 2017, UNODC, as part of its enhanced focus on the smuggling of migrants in Libya, organized three days of training in Tunis for relevant departments of the Ministry of the Interior, the Libyan coastguard and the Attorney-General's Office on the investigation of cases of migrant smuggling and the provision of adequate protection and assistance to smuggled migrants.

C. Security sector

Support for Libyan planning for interim security arrangements

54. Libyan armed and security forces remained fragmented. The Libyan army was divided between Libyan National Army forces based in the east and army units in the west under the control of the Presidency Council. The Presidency Council has yet to assume effective control over the Tripoli security apparatus, which continued to be riven by divisions. In effect, Tripoli was under the control of several armed groups only nominally operating under the Ministry of the Interior. Police forces, although present throughout the country and retaining a modicum of cohesion, continued to be weak and in need of capacity-building support.

55. UNSMIL worked closely with the Presidency Council and the Ministries of the Interior and Defence on the implementation of the interim security arrangements outlined in the Libyan Political Agreement. Key areas of support included assessments and planning for security in Tripoli; assistance for the formation of the Presidential Guard; engagement with armed groups in the capital; and activities for countering improvised explosive devices and clearing explosive remnants of war.

56. UNSMIL continued to advise the Presidential Guard, led by General Najmi Nakua, on force generation and capacity-building issues related to the establishment of the Guard. The Presidential Guard was tasked with protecting, inter alia, the Presidency Council and the Government of National Accord, as well as foreign dignitaries in Tripoli. Recruitment into the force started in late 2016. Some 180 personnel were deployed during the reporting period. UNSMIL also engaged with the Ministry of Defence in connection with the development of an assistance task force for securing Tripoli, based on regular army units in the capital.

57. The work of UNSMIL to strengthen the country's security institutions also included the provision of technical assistance to the Ministry of the Interior, addressing organizational gaps and ensuring a more extensive deployment of police units in and around Tripoli. The Mission's work was supported by the European Union Liaison and Planning Cell, which provided planning assistance across the board. Moreover, UNSMIL assisted the European Union military operation in the Southern Central Mediterranean in training the Libyan coastguard through the provision of advice on vetting and education in human rights and gender sensitization. Some 90 members of the Libyan coastguard completed a first package of training in February 2017.

Arms and ammunition management

58. There continued to be a significant risk of death and injury from explosive remnants of war and booby traps across Libya. Internally displaced persons returning to Sirte and humanitarian actors working in the area remain at an especially high risk of death and injury. The United Nations Mine Action Service facilitated meetings in December 2016 and February 2017 between the national

authorities, the international community and mine action partners to develop a plan for preventing and addressing this hazard, including through communication with the population. It also facilitated training and equipment for emergency trauma medical techniques for 12 clearance personnel working for the authorities in Sirte. With funding from the Central Emergency Response Fund, the United Nations Mine Action Service also provided training and equipment allowing non-technical survey teams to carry out explosive hazards risk assessments at 18 locations in Benghazi.

D. Women's empowerment

59. UNSMIL, in close coordination with the United Nations country team, continued to promote the role of women in the political process, in accordance with the implementation of Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000) and 2122 (2013). UNSMIL promoted and supported women's political participation through dedicated capacity-building initiatives, with the objective of reaching a target of 30 per cent representation by 2018. On 14 December 2016, UNSMIL met with women members of the House of Representatives in Tubruq to develop an action plan based on the recommendations emanating from the conference of women parliamentarians convened in November 2016 (S/2016/1011, para. 53). As a result, a women's caucus was established.

60. From 23 to 26 January 2017, UNSMIL, with the support of UNDP, organized a follow-up conference in Tunis on the Libyan women's agenda for peace. The conference was attended by over 60 women, who agreed to develop a framework for a national campaign on peaceful coexistence at the community and national levels, for which UNSMIL will provide technical support. Seven women from different regions in Libya were nominated at the conference as focal points for the outreach campaign.

61. On 31 January 2017, UNSMIL in partnership with Operation Sophia of the European Union military operation in the Southern Central Mediterranean, provided gender sensitization training for nearly 100 Libyan coastguards in order to improve their skills in dealing with women and children migrants. The training also promoted the recruitment of women coastguards. As part of the Mission's longer-term engagement with the Libyan coastguard, in partnership with the military operation, a workshop was held in Malta on 7 March to begin the development of a training manual.

E. Youth

62. UNSMIL continued to widen its engagement with youth representatives and to promote their activities on its social media accounts. On 4 February 2017, my Special Representative held a meeting with civil society organizations and university students in Tripoli, during which participants expressed their concerns and their vision for the future of Libya. In the context of a perception survey conducted by UNSMIL in January, Libyan youth emerged as the group most supportive of the Libyan Political Agreement. The survey showed that more than 50 per cent of Libyan youth have either no access or insufficient access to basic services, including health care, medicine and electricity, as well as to cash-liquidity.

63. In close collaboration with Libyan authorities, and in support of the development of a national strategy for youth, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization are preparing a Libyan youth policy paper on "Youth: challenges and opportunities", on the basis of broad consultations with Libyan youth in seven municipalities.

64. In partnership with the European Union, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) launched a three-year multisectoral adolescent and youth development programme in four target municipalities (Bayda', Sabha, Zintan and Zuwarah). To replicate and scale up youth development activities nationwide, UNICEF signed a cooperation framework with the Ministry of Local Government on 13 January 2017. As a result, an interministerial committee was established in Tripoli to coordinate youth-focused activities among various government ministries and agencies. In February, UNICEF also organized a seven-day training workshop on participatory research for selected Libyan youth leaders in Tunis.

F. Coordination of international assistance

65. UNSMIL continued its efforts to coordinate international assistance. Two meetings of the joint Technical Coordination Committee were convened under the co-chairmanship of the Libyan Minister of Planning and my Deputy Special Representative, with the participation of the international community, as part of the coordination framework for international technical cooperation with the Government of National Accord. In addition, the basic services working group, led by the Ministry of Planning, and the economic recovery working group, co-chaired by the Ministry of Planning and the World Bank, were convened to align international assistance with Libyan priorities.

66. On 14 December 2016, UNSMIL and the United Nations country team in Libya gathered with national officials and representatives of civil society to discuss the future engagement of the United Nations in Libya. The outcome document proposed shared objectives of the United Nations system in Libya, including areas of support to government institutions.

G. Humanitarian, stabilization and development assistance

67. In total, 1.3 million people in Libya are in need of humanitarian assistance, with emergency health care, civilian protection and access to such basic services as medicine, water and food identified as clear priority needs, according to the Humanitarian Response Plan for 2017, published on 15 December 2016.

68. The health-care system in Libya is on the brink of collapse as a result of the conflict. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), as of February 2017 there were more than 303,000 internally displaced persons in Libya. According to the World Food Programme (WFP), about 17 per cent of internally displaced persons, an 11 per cent increase since 2015, are food insecure and 60 per cent are vulnerable to food insecurity.

69. Insufficient funding is hampering efforts to provide a meaningful and sustained response to humanitarian needs in Libya. Despite a relatively modest financial requirement of $151 million to assist 0.9 million people, only $9 million (6 per cent) has been received to date for the Humanitarian Response Plan.

70. Despite challenges and funding shortfalls, United Nations agencies, funds and programmes continued to provide urgent humanitarian relief and assistance, mainly through national counterparts. Since December 2016, more than 4,400 displaced families have been assisted with core relief items and cash assistance by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 75,800 internally displaced persons have benefited from on-site food distribution by WFP and 1,200 household farms have received improved seeds distributed by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

71. Over 17 per cent of Libyan hospitals remained closed during the period and all facilities reported severe shortages of material and equipment. In response, the World Health Organization, in partnership with the International Medical Corps and UNDP, have provided support to public hospitals through the distribution of interagency emergency health kits in Tripoli, Awbari and Jabal al-Gharbi; the funding of mobile medical units in Benghazi, Misratah, Sabha and Tripoli; and the installation of solar panels in nine hospitals in Tripoli, Benghazi and Sabha. UNICEF and its partners have provided educational and recreational support in safe learning spaces to school-age children in conflict-affected cities and hard to reach areas. By January 2017, some 9,500 children had completed their three-month cycle catch-up classes in Benghazi by January. In Sirte, UNICEF reported that over 10,400 returnee children are in urgent need of education, protection and psychosocial support.

72. About 1.3 million children were vaccinated from 10 to 17 December 2016. UNICEF also facilitated access to safe water supplies in Mizdah and to sanitation facilities in the municipalities of Tawurgha', Janzur and Suq al-Khamis, reaching more than 42,000 individuals. Hygiene kits were distributed to some 23,000 individuals in Benghazi, returnees in Sirte and women and unaccompanied children displaced to Misratah.

73. As of 3 March 2017, IOM had recorded some 13,500 refugees and migrants who had reached Italy by way of the Central Mediterranean route. The Libyan coastguard and other entities rescued more than 2,800 migrants between 1 December 2016 and 3 March 2017, and more than 140 deaths were reported. Of the 245,000 migrants identified by IOM, more than 6,600 were held in detention centres managed by the Department for Combating Illegal Migration. IOM estimates, however, that between 700,000 and 1 million refugees and migrants are present in the country. UNHCR and its partners continued to provide emergency assistance to survivors of rescue at sea, as well as to build the capacity of Libyan officials from the navy and the coastguard through training and the provision of equipment. Since 1 December 2016, UNHCR registered more than 40,000 refugees and asylum seekers, most of whom were Syrians and Palestinians.

74. Since December 2016, IOM has facilitated the voluntary return of more than 710 migrants to 13 countries of origin. Emergency assistance was provided by IOM and UNHCR to detained migrants, including in the Fallah, Gharyan and Tariq al-Sikkah facilities. Both agencies are pursuing efforts to transfer those migrants to better equipped facilities and advocate for the release of refugees and asylum seekers.

75. The Stabilization Facility for Libya project, launched by UNDP in April 2016 with funding from Member States in partnership with the Presidency Council and the Minister of Planning, is supporting cities affected and damaged by conflict. With a budget of $34 million, the Facility is reaching approximately 1.5 million people. It is currently operational in Kiklah, Awbari and Benghazi and is also expanding its outreach to Sirte and Sabha in the south in order to pre-position equipment, such as ambulances, garbage trucks and generators, and recruit teams of coordinators and engineers to be deployed for planning the rehabilitation of hospitals, health centres, schools and water systems.

76. A comprehensive assessment of core government and State functions in support of the Presidency Council and the Government of National Accord was completed in March 2017 by UNDP, in collaboration with UNSMIL. The assessment covered government employees, civil service reform, security and policing, justice and law enforcement and local governance.

V. Deployment of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya and security arrangements

77. In view of the security conditions in Libya, a total of 140 UNSMIL international staff remained deployed in Tunis, with an additional 30 national staff in Libya, as of 28 February 2017. Furthermore, three international staff members and one General Service staff member were deployed at United Nations headquarters, and three national staff at the Global Service Centre in Brindisi, Italy.

78. As set out in Security Council resolutions 2238 (2015), 2273 (2016), 2291 (2016) and 2323 (2016), UNSMIL continued to work towards the phased re-establishment of a permanent presence in Libya, as security and political conditions allow. UNSMIL staff continued to visit Libya on a regular basis to maintain access to key partners and political and security interlocutors across the country. Regular United Nations flights to Libya, and the availability of United Nations vehicles in the country, continued to facilitate the implementation of core mandate areas, enabling visits to detention centres, meetings with judicial authorities and engagement by the country team to enhance the provision of humanitarian, stabilization and development assistance.

79. UNSMIL has identified a location for a compound in Tripoli and, in December 2016, it entered into a contractual agreement to secure the premises. Construction work is currently under way to implement the required security and logistical enhancements. The United Nations Guard Unit to protect staff and premises is ready to be deployed when conditions allow. Alongside security personnel, a small team of support staff is serving on a rotational basis in Tripoli to oversee the works and ensure their completion in line with identified needs and standards.

80. As part of my continued commitment to engagement on the situation in Libya, in February 2017 I initiated a system-wide strategic assessment review, which will: (a) examine the role of the United Nations in Libya; and (b) shape priority-setting and the operational posture of UNSMIL and the United Nations country team across all activities in both the immediate and the longer term. The assessment process will contribute to my overall vision for Libya.

Security and safety of staff members and operations

81. United Nations personnel in Libya continued to work in a high-risk security environment to implement programmes and activities. The United Nations is still exposed to a wide range of threats, giving rise to a continued requirement for additional security resources in its programmes. During the reporting period, UNSMIL endeavoured to increase operations inside Libya and to maintain a permanent presence of security and other support staff in Tripoli on a rotational basis. As a result of the security situation, restrictions were implemented on the movement of personnel in Tripoli and on international staff taking flights to Tripoli and other Libyan destinations. On 4 December 2016, a United Nations national staff member became the victim of an attempted kidnapping while on his way to work. Peaceful demonstrations against the United Nations, with low numbers of protesters, took place in the capital and in major eastern cities during the reporting period.

82. There is an ongoing threat of terrorist attacks against the international community throughout Libya. That threat was highlighted by the explosion of an improvised explosive device in the vicinity of the Italian and Egyptian embassies and the Ministry of Planning on 21 January 2017. While ISIL no longer controls territory in Libya, there were sightings of its operatives and a number of attacks in different areas were attributed to the group. The security situation in Tripoli is

fragile and there is a serious threat of armed conflict potentially affecting United Nations staff or operations.

VI. Observations

83. Given the volatility of the security situation in Tripoli and the fighting in the oil crescent and elsewhere, Libya is at risk of a return to widespread conflict. I am alarmed by the renewed military escalation and the ongoing political stalemate in the country, which puts further strain on the transition and on the institutions emanating from the Libyan Political Agreement. The Presidency Council and the Government of National Accord remain constrained in their ability to govern effectively and to provide much needed basic services and security to the population.

84. I remind all parties that there can be no military solution to the Libyan crisis. I urge all armed actors to exercise restraint and remind them of their obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law, in particular the duty to protect civilians and the natural resources and national infrastructure of Libya. I call on all security actors to move forward without delay with the implementation of the interim security arrangements set out in the Libyan Political Agreement. I underscore the need for swift progress on the creation of professional and effective Libyan armed and security forces operating under civilian control. In this regard, I welcome progress on the formation of the Presidential Guard.

85. I call on all political stakeholders to take the necessary steps for a peaceful settlement to the Libyan crisis. The Libyan Political Agreement continues to be supported by the majority of Libyan and international stakeholders as the only political framework to lead the country forward. I take note of the emerging consensus on the need to make limited amendments to the agreement. This represents an opportunity to overcome the current political stalemate and move the transition forward. It is now urgent that all stakeholders, in an inclusive process, address the key issues hampering the implementation of the Political Agreement, including the composition and structure of various institutions, in particular the executive authority and military command. The United Nations stands ready to support a mechanism acceptable to all Libyan stakeholders, which is empowered, representative and able to resolve these issues. In accordance with its good offices mandate, the United Nations will continue to facilitate consensus on the reunification of the country's security institutions, including the future of armed groups and the development of a professional military under civilian control.

86. I welcome the efforts made by the Presidency Council to deliver on its mandate, including through establishing and disbursing the budget. Positive cooperation among the Presidency Council, the Government of National Accord and the Central Bank of Libya is essential to enable the Government to deliver services to the people. As the economic and financial situation remains fragile, I urge the parties to redouble their efforts to engage constructively to address funding and liquidity shortages, as well as longer-term structural issues. I am concerned that the progress made in restoring oil production and exports is at risk of being undermined by the recent escalation of violence in the oil crescent.

87. Institutions must continue to function in accordance with their mandate to prevent further deterioration of the political and security situation. The Libyan transition cannot wait. In this regard, I call on all Libyan institutions to assume their responsibilities to move the transition forward, on the basis of the Libyan Political Agreement.

88. I encourage the Libyan people to redouble their efforts and commit to a nationwide, Libyan-led reconciliation process. Such a process is essential for reinforcing the political dialogue and complements local reconciliation. The United Nations will continue to engage with national actors, tribal leaders, representatives of youth groups, municipalities, women's groups and other local community groups in this important endeavour. I encourage the parties to make full use of the good offices of UNSMIL to advance local and national reconciliation in the months ahead.

89. I commend Libyan women for actively engaging in peacebuilding initiatives and I encourage all Libyans to continue to strive for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security and resolution 2250 (2015) on youth and peace and security. I look forward to the appointment of the chairperson of the Women's Support and Empowerment Unit and I call on the Presidency Council to ensure that women are adequately represented in the Government of National Accord. The United Nations stands ready to promote and facilitate wider engagement and participation of women from across the spectrum of Libyan society in the political process and public institutions.

90. I welcome the liberation of Sirte and Benghazi from ISIL, and commend the courage and determination of Libyan forces. I express my deep sympathies to the victims of terrorism and violent extremism and to the families of all those who lost their lives in that fight. The high toll of terrorism on the Libyan people and the continued presence of ISIL in Libya underscore the urgent need to establish unified executive and security structures across the country to enable this threat to be contained.

91. I am concerned by the removal of elected mayors in municipal councils in eastern Libya and their replacement by unelected officials. Democratically elected, effective government bodies remain a cornerstone of a political transition and are essential for ensuring accountability and the effective provision of services. I call for the restoration of elected civilian representatives and urge Libyan actors to preserve democratically elected bodies throughout the country.

92. I remain deeply alarmed by the human rights situation in the country and by the lack of progress in achieving accountability for serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law. I condemn the targeting of civilian facilities, especially hospitals and medical centres. Armed groups across the country that continue to commit such violations must be held accountable, whether through national or international mechanisms. I welcome the commitment of the International Criminal Court to expand investigations and to making Libya a priority in 2017.

93. Migrants and refugees in Libya continue to suffer horrific abuses and risk death while transiting the country and across the Mediterranean Sea. Libya, with the support of the international community, has a responsibility to ensure that such abuses stop. While I welcome ongoing international efforts, I call on the Libyan authorities to step up prevention, oversight and protection measures, where possible. I also call on destination countries beyond Libya to ensure that any training provided to Libyan institutions that engage with migrants be accompanied by comprehensive efforts to stop the arbitrary detention of migrants and to improve their treatment in detention. I also reiterate that there is a need for a comprehensive approach to address the root causes in the countries of origin that drive so many people to take this dangerous journey.

94. I am gravely concerned at the overall deterioration of the humanitarian situation. Hundreds of thousands of Libyans, including those who have been repeatedly displaced, continue to bear the brunt of armed confrontations in different

parts of the country. I call on the Libyan authorities to enable and facilitate the safe return of displaced populations to their homes. I also urge Member States to provide resources to the Humanitarian Response Plan for 2017, so that relief can be brought to those in critical need of protection and humanitarian assistance.

95. I welcome the international community's swift response to support the decontamination of Sirte. However, the widespread presence across Libya of explosive hazards, including improvised explosive devices, continues to threaten civilians and humanitarian actors in areas such as Benghazi and Tripoli, where there is limited national capacity to address those threats. I continue to urge Member States to support and fund activities in the most severely affected areas and to provide training and equipment to the Libyan actors.

96. UNSMIL continues to work on building its premises in Tripoli to enable its return. It is closely monitoring the political and security environment on the ground to assess whether the conditions are conducive to that end. A system-wide strategic assessment will continue in the months ahead to ensure priority alignment of the United Nations presence in Libya with the evolving security and political situation.

97. I would like to express my appreciation to the African Union, the European Union, the League of Arab States and Member States for their strong support for the work of the United Nations in Libya. I am particularly encouraged by the commitment and support of regional actors and organizations, including the neighbours of Libya, for the Libyan political process. That commitment was demonstrated at the meeting of the "quartet", comprising the African Union, the European Union, the League of Arab States and UNSMIL, held in Cairo on 18 March 2017. I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the staff of UNSMIL and the United Nations system for their dedication and hard work and for their efforts to support the transition in Libya. I also wish to express my gratitude to my Special Representative, Martin Kobler, for his efforts to support the Libyans in driving forward the political process and implementing the Libyan Political Agreement.